

LESSON 7 Foundational Truths and Beyond

Have you ever been lost? Perhaps you lost your sense of direction in the woods, a jungle, or a strange village or town. You continued walking and, after passing a place you had already been, you realized your error. You had been walking in a circle instead of going forward!

This can be true in our Christian experience. Many believers, as we have seen, refuse to grow up. Others cannot seem to find their way. They want to go forward, but they seem to go in circles. God's Word teaches an important principle: *We must establish what we have learned and then go on.* We should not continue to repeat the same lesson. Let us not linger in childhood. The foundation of our Christian experience must be made secure. Then, we must build beyond foundational truths.

lesson outline

Maturity: Building and Leaving

Seeing the Goal

Knowing How to Reach the Goal

Leaving: A Necessity to Arriving

Six Stones in Our Foundation

Conditions for Becoming a Christian

Repenting from Useless Works

Believing in God

Practices in the Christian Life

Teaching About Baptisms

Teaching About Laying on of Hands

Pictures of the Future

Resurrection of the Dead

Eternal Judgment

Summary

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the kind of faith Christian maturity requires.
- State what the believer's spiritual growth includes in addition to personal effort.
- Identify things the believer must make secure in his life before leaving them to go forward in Christian maturity.
- Define the word *catechism*, explaining its relationship to our spiritual experience.
- Describe the repentance necessary to salvation.
- State what everyone who believes in God's Son receives.
- State the purpose of baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- Describe special blessings and responsibilities that accompany the laying on of hands.
- Point out the guarantee that believers will be resurrected.
- Explain why our belief in the sacrifice of Christ delivers us from the penalty of eternal death.

learning activities

1. Read the lesson.
2. Look up in the glossary the definitions to key words you do not understand.
3. Do the exercises in the lesson development, referring as needed to the lesson.
4. Take the self-test at the end of this lesson, and check your answers carefully. Review those items answered incorrectly.
5. Review Unit 2 (Lessons 5–7), then take the unit progress evaluation and send it to your ICI instructor.

key words

doctrine
foundation
guarantee

ordain
penance
require

resurrection

lesson development

MATURITY: BUILDING AND LEAVING

We have several times in our study come to Hebrews 5:11–14. Writing to a group of first-century Christians, the author discusses their immaturity. He wants to teach them important truths. However, the truths cannot be received because the believers have not grown beyond the baby stage. It is necessary to teach them the first lessons of God’s message over and over. They have not used the Word of God to grow. They will take only milk.

Seeing the Goal

Objective 1. Describe the kind of faith Christian maturity requires.

Hebrews 6:1 continues this discussion on moving ahead: “Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity.” The word in the original language which is translated *maturity* means “a full age or a mature adulthood.”

Application

1 According to Hebrews 6:1, who determines our maturity?

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What progress could be made on a building if the workmen laid the foundation every day? None! Likewise, no teacher can progress if he or she lays the foundations repeatedly.

Great teachers of the New Testament era generally divided their students into three groups: (1) beginners, (2) those making some progress, and (3) those making more progress. The goal of the believer is to be among those maturing: those who do not need the first lessons repeated. *This should be your desire.* You should want to go forward.

We have studied this goal of maturity from many points of view. It is to become like Jesus Christ, to accept our role under His Lordship. It is to grow in understanding. It is to be a teacher

sometimes rather than having to be taught all the time. Remember that Christian maturity does not refer to total or complete knowledge. It is not sinless perfection. It does require a growing and responsible faith. The longer we have known Jesus, the better understanding we should have of who we believe Him to be. The longer we know Christ the more He should be reflected in our lives. Old faults should disappear. New virtues should appear and develop.

Knowing How to Reach the Goal

Objective 2. *State what the believer's spiritual growth includes in addition to personal effort.*

The teacher in Hebrews writes, “And God permitting, we will do so” (Hebrews 6:3). Notice that this passage includes the writer. This is not just an exhortation to the Hebrews.

An important point must be made from the original language in Hebrews 6:1. The word translated “we will do so” is from the Greek verb *phero*, which means “to carry or bear.” Here it is in the passive voice and means, “Let us be carried along” to mature teaching.

Two important teachings come from this word study. First, the will to do is not accomplished by personal effort alone! Christian maturity is achieved under the active power of the Holy Spirit. We have studied this in several places. The thought in this passage is of our personal *surrender* to an active influence. God is already working toward our growth. We have only to surrender ourselves. We must yield to Him.

Christian perfection or maturity would be difficult if we were left to do it on our own. Instead, Hebrews 6 and many other Scriptures tell us we are to be carried along toward this goal.

Have you ever tried to row a boat against the current? That is very difficult. In a way, the believer must fight the world's current. But in spiritual matters, the strong current of the Holy Spirit is moving the believer toward maturity. We have only to cooperate, by our will, with God's purpose.

Application

2 According to Hebrews 13:20–21, who provides every good thing you need, and why are these things provided for you?

.....

.....

This passage explains further that an important reason for our obedience and progression is that God may “work in us what is pleasing to him.” The goal is our maturity and the glory and purpose of God!

The second thing that must be learned from the study of *phero* in Hebrews 6:1 is that this Greek verb is in a form which shows a continuous action. “Being carried along” through the active influence of the Holy Spirit is a continuous action. It does not happen through a single crisis. Maturity in Jesus Christ does not come to us in a single moment. *This is vital to know.* The goal of this action of the Holy Spirit is spiritual growth into full maturity. In the same way, our surrender must be continuous. We might translate this passage, “Let us continue to allow ourselves to be carried along toward maturity.”

Leaving: A Necessity to Arriving

Objective 3. *Identify things the believer must secure in his life before leaving them to go forward in Christian maturity.*

We tie a boat or canoe to a tree or dock so it will not float away. But we must untie the boat before we move away. Wouldn't it look strange to see someone rowing without removing the rope? He would be going nowhere! Thus, it is necessary to leave one place in order to get to another place.



Perhaps this illustration seems funny. “No one would be that silly,” you say. Yet, in the Christian life this can happen. Every believer knows he is supposed to move toward the fullness of Christian maturity. The full stature of Jesus Christ is the goal for his life. In spite of this, many believers are still occupied with the foundation. They continue to lay again the first teachings.

Recall the instructions of Hebrews 6:1, not to repeat the early lessons of the Christian message but to go on to maturity. The necessary condition to progress is giving up. As children mature, they must abandon old toys and other childish ways. Here, the word “leave” refers to moving from elementary lessons to a deeper knowledge, as those who pass on to a new subject or another grade in school.

But it would be foolish to build higher without first making sure the foundation is secure. The writer to the Hebrews makes sure believers recognize their duty to progress. Recognizing this will make them anxious to see the foundation is secure. Then they can begin to build upon it, rather than constantly relearning the foundation. In this study, we will take a short look at the truths *foundational*. Our purpose will be to let you establish them in your own life.

Application

3 According to 1 Corinthians 3:11, what is the only foundation for the Christian experience?

- a) The Bible
- b) The church
- c) Jesus Christ

4 In Hebrews 6:1, things the believer must leave behind are called the of the Christian message.



SIX STONES IN OUR FOUNDATION

Objective 4. Define the word catechism, explaining its relationship to our spiritual experience.

The Bible clearly states in Hebrews 6:1–3 that certain doctrines are more basic or foundational than others. The goal, you remember, is to go on to true Christian maturity. But we cannot hope to do this unless the sure foundation in Christian doctrine has been secured. A doctrine is *an important principle or belief of Christian faith*. In speaking of this foundation, the writer lists six doctrines.

Application

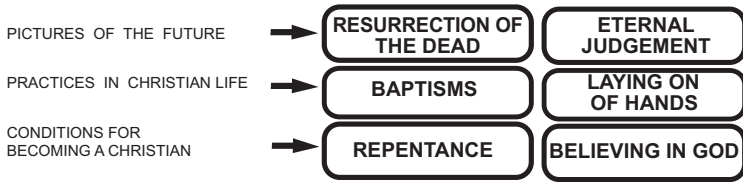
5 Carefully read Hebrews 6:1–2, then list the six stones (topics) in this doctrinal foundation.

- a
- b
- c
- d
- e
- f



Ancient records tell us Christians in the first century treated these foundational teachings as a catechism. *A catechism is made up of the elementary points of Christian doctrine taught to a new Christian*. No one would suggest that these stones make up all the important early teaching for a Christian. Yet they are a foundation. You can see that these six stones are basically divided into three sets of two each. The groundwork is laid in becoming a Christian. The next two stones are examples of practices in Christian life.

Doctrines concerning the future make up the third set. We shall study them according to this arrangement.



Conditions for Becoming a Christian

Repenting from Useless Works

Objective 5. *Describe the repentance necessary to salvation.*

The first stone of our foundation for becoming a Christian is turning away from useless works (Hebrews 6:1). This is an act of repentance. *Metanoein* is the Greek word for “repenting” in this verse. This Greek verb has one meaning throughout the history of the language. It means “to change one’s mind.” Repentance in the New Testament emphasizes *decision* rather than emotion. Many people think of repentance as an emotion—the shedding of tears and so forth. Others think repentance is a religious rite, such as “doing penance.” It is possible to cry or to go through penance and not repent. Repentance is a firm inward decision—a change of mind.

The word translated “repentance” in the Old Testament means literally “to turn” or “to return” or “to turn back.” The New Testament word emphasizes the inner decision, and the Old Testament word emphasizes the outward action. Put the two together and *repentance* becomes “an inner change of mind which brings about an outward turning back or turning around.” Through it, we begin to move in a new direction. Repentance is necessary to salvation of sinful people.

Application

6 Read Luke 15:11–32. The story is probably familiar to you. Point out in your own words the inner decision that the prodigal made in verse 18.

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7 Read Luke 15:20. How did the prodigal carry out his inner decision?

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We have already seen that sinful man turned his back on God’s purposes for his life. Every step he took was away from God. Sinful man must change in two ways: he must change his mind and change his direction. He must turn from his sin toward God.

Read Matthew 27:3–4. Here Judas is said to have repented. The word here is not the Greek word we have discussed. It is a word which means “to feel sorry, to experience anguish.” Apparently, he did not change his inner attitude or outward direction, for the next verse says he “hanged himself.”

Application

8 John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus Christ. He preached a special baptism. According to Mark 1:4, what did he tell the people to do about their sins?

- a) Turn away from their sins
- b) Learn the ways of God
- c) Become sorry and cry over wrongdoings

9 Read Mark 1:15. What did Jesus preach we must do with our sins?

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Everywhere in the New Testament, repentance is the first necessary response of man to the gospel. God demands it. You may want to write in your notebook some other passages that teach this. They include Luke 13:3; Acts 2:37–38; and Acts 20:20–21.

Note further that this first stone in our Christian foundation describes a certain kind of repentance or turning around. It is a repentance from dead or useless works. I am sure you know the whole world is “religious.” Every person worships something. And there are many religious “works.” People hope to earn favor

with various gods by religious works. Buy these are useless, dead works.

Application

10 According to Ephesians 2:1, what causes people to be dead spiritually?

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Colossians 2:13 says, “You were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature.” Human’s acts lack the power to meet even the basic need of man. How then can we satisfy the holy God!

Believing in God

Objective 6. *State what everyone who believes in God’s Son receives.*

The second stone of our foundation conditions for becoming a Christian is believing in God. Jesus said in John 6:47, “He who believes has everlasting life.” To believe is to place our trust and confidence in someone or something. Hebrews 11:1–2 tells us, “Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.”

John 3:14–21 gives one of the best explanations of the importance of belief in Christ to the Christian life. Many believers around the world are helped by it.

Application

11 What will everyone who believes in God’s Son receive?

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12 According to John 3:18, why is a person judged?

- a) Because of his sins
- b) Because he is not a part of the church
- c) Because he has not believed in God’s only Son
- d) Because he does not do the works of righteousness



In the original language, the phrase “believing in God” suggests the idea of *being directed* toward. Our faith is toward God. The special tense or time of this word suggests we are resting in that decision.

A great missionary was once trying to translate the Gospel of John into the language of the people he was working with. He could not find a word for “believe” in their language. One day, a friend from among the people came into the missionary’s house. He was exhausted from working under the hot sun. He fell into a chair and used a word in his language which meant: “I’m putting all my weight on this chair. I’m unable to hold myself up.”

Immediately the missionary jumped up and said, “That’s the word I need.” Faith means placing our entire weight and hope in Jesus Christ as God’s Son and our Savior.



Practices in the Christian Life

Our second couplet of foundation truths has to do with God-ordained practices in the church. Some are called *ordinances* or *institutes*. An ordinance is a practice God has ordered the church to keep. For example, the Lord’s Supper or communion is an ordinance.

Teaching About Baptisms

Objective 7. *State the purpose of baptism in the Holy Spirit.*

According to Hebrews 6:2, the teaching about baptisms is a critical part of our Christian foundation. There are several baptisms in the Scripture. They include John’s baptism as a sign of repentance, the baptism of Christ, and the baptism of suffering. The Christian is concerned about three basic baptisms: (1) baptism into Christ’s body through the new birth, (2) baptism in water as an outward evidence of one’s experience in Jesus Christ, (3) baptism in the Holy Spirit. A thorough coverage

of this subject is beyond the scope of this course. A course in Christian Doctrine would be highly recommended for this coverage. However, through this course you will gain at least a working knowledge of this foundational truth.

Application

13 Baptism into Christ’s body through the new birth is the subject of 1 Corinthians 12:11–13. According to this passage, we have all been..... into one body by the same.....

Underline in your Bible all the appearances of “one” in 1 Corinthians 12:11–13.

An important Scripture for us to remember on the subject of the union of all believers with Christ is Galatians 3:26–28:

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

The second baptism we need to know is easier to understand. I refer to the believer’s baptism in water. It is physical. All Christians agree that baptism must be meaningful. It must not be an empty ritual (as would be the baptism of an unbeliever). When the believer is born again, it is an inward and invisible work. But the person experiencing this work is commanded to show it in a physical way by being baptized in water.

Application

14 Read Acts 2:38. From this passage explain the step Peter told people to take following repentance.

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15 First Peter 3:21 says baptism is “not the removal of dirt from the body.” According to this passage, what is water baptism?

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Romans 6:1–4 illustrates water baptism. It teaches that baptism is an identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The waters believers go into are likened to the grave. Through faith, we leave in those waters any remnants of our old life. When we burst forth from the baptismal waters, we relate to Christ’s resurrection. “Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” Again, I recommend that you study this subject in more detail.

The third baptism we should know is the one Jesus promised to His disciples: “John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5). John had prophesied this in Matthew 3:11–12, “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I. . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” In Acts 2 we read about the experiences of Jesus’ followers when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Do not be confused because this experience in the Holy Spirit is spoken of in different ways. It is a “pouring” in Joel 2:28–29, a “filling” in Ephesians 5:18, “rains” in Hosea 6:3 and James 5:7. Specific passages tell of other believers (besides the first disciples) being baptized in the Holy Spirit: the Samaritans in Acts 8:14–17, the apostle Paul in Acts 9:17 and 1 Corinthians 14:18, the house of Cornelius in Acts 10:44–48, and the Ephesian disciples in Acts 19:1–7. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is for the purpose of exalting Christ, producing spiritual gifts and fruit in our lives, and giving us power for God’s service.

Teaching About Laying on of Hands

Objective 8. *Describe special blessings and responsibilities that accompany the laying on of hands.*

Another Christian practice which the Word of God considers a foundation truth is the teaching about “the laying on of hands” (Hebrews 6:2). In Old Testament Jewish practice, this rite was used to symbolically transfer man’s guilt to the animal sacrifice. It was also used to transfer a special blessing to a person, or to

signify his being set apart for a special office. Practice of the last two of these forms continued into the New Testament. Let us briefly look at them.

Jesus blessed children by laying His hands on them (Mark 10:16), and others laid hands on people as a solemn means of blessing them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. People received the Holy Spirit when an apostle laid hands on them (Acts 19:6).

Application

16 According to James 5:14–15, what blessings are given to a sick person as the elders of the church “anoint him with oil” and pray for him?

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The laying on of hands was also used to set apart a person for special work. Sometimes this is called *ordaining*. To ordain simply means to put in an official position or responsibility.

Application

17 Read Acts 6:1–6. Who were being set apart to a special work by the laying on of hands in verse 6?

- a) The apostles
- b) Seven men to take charge of business
- c) Elders for the church

18 Read Acts 13:1–3. Who asked for two men to be set apart for a special work?

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19 Name the two men in this passage who were set apart by the laying on of hands.

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The Holy Spirit thinks it important that we have a basic knowledge of these three kinds of baptisms and the practice of laying on of hands.

Pictures of the Future

Now we come to the last pair of truths in the six foundation stones of our Christian doctrine. These are “the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment” (Hebrews 6:2). These truths taken together emphasize the permanence of our present actions. They speak of the significance of our earthly lives in the eternal order. These are the foundation stones which speak loudly of man’s current responsibility.

Resurrection of the Dead

Objective 9. *Point out the guarantee that believers will be resurrected.*

There has always been a dispute in the world over any teaching about the resurrection of the dead. Even in Jesus’ day, one group of Jews did not believe in the resurrection. It is a teaching that places responsibility upon man. Some men would rather not know there will be a resurrection. Yet deep in man’s spirit is the hope of life after death.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is very important to us. First Corinthians 15:12–28 is a section of Scripture that shows the relationship of our resurrection to that of Jesus.

Application

20 State in your own words (based on 1 Corinthians 15:15–16) how Paul relates Christ’s resurrection to our resurrection.

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Let us emphasize what Paul says on this subject in 1 Corinthians 15:20: “Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” In Acts 4:2

the resurrection of Jesus Christ was being preached as proof that the dead will rise to life.

Application

21 Read 1 Peter 1:3–5. According to verse 3, what is the believer given through the resurrection of Jesus?

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Paul's dominant desire was "to know Christ and the power of his resurrection" (Philippians 3:10). We, too, should want to know Jesus Christ in the power of His resurrection. Remember that in Romans 6:4 even our water baptism links Christ's resurrection with our own NEW LIFE. Praise God!

Eternal Judgment

Objective 10. *Explain why our belief in the sacrifice of Christ delivers us from the penalty of eternal death.*

Resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment are (as we have said) the last two foundational truths. Acts 17:31 speaks clearly about them: "He has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

There remains before man the judicial process of God. It will be God's judgment through Jesus Christ. At least seven specific judgments are referred to in Scripture:

1. The judgment of the cross where Christ, as a substitute, bore the judgment from God which was due the sinner because of his sins. At that judgment the substitute was executed. Thus, all who believe in His sacrifice are delivered from the penalty of eternal death (John 5:24).

2. Judgment or punishment of the believer who persists in willful disobedience. We looked at this in the section on Wrong Exercise of Will in Lesson 4 of our course. Perhaps you would like to review that section. Note in particular the teaching from Hebrews 12. (See also 1 Corinthians 11:31–32.)

3. The judgment of Israel (Ezekiel 36:16–21).
4. The judgment of believers at the judgment seat of Christ. Perhaps you would like to turn back to the section on Preparing for the Final Test in Lesson 5 and review the teaching we have already given in this area (see 2 Corinthians 5:10).
5. The judgment of the nations (Matthew 25:31–46).
6. The judgment of the fallen angels (Jude 6).
7. The judgment at the great white throne, which is the place of judgment for the unbelieving world (Revelation 20:11–15).

These last two foundational truths are important to us because they help us live with eternal values in mind. There is no specific exercise involved with our study of judgments; however, reviewing the Scriptures referred to in this section will help to reinforce these truths.

SUMMARY

The truths we have briefly studied are the foundation of Christian experience. We are to move on to maturity by not laying this foundation over and over again like children building, knocking down, and rebuilding in the sand. However, the believer must secure the foundation. We can't build higher until it is secure.

But once it has been secured, it is time to leave the foundation for other things. I believe the writer to the Hebrews is showing that both Christian doctrine and Christian experience are necessary to spiritual growth.

The thief on the cross, the woman at the well, the apostle Paul, the Philippian jailer—ALL had definite, though widely differing, experiences. We too must know we have had a real experience with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Doctrine is also important. Many Christians, like Apollos in the New Testament, teach sincerely but without sufficient knowledge.

We are to go forward to the building itself which is true Christian character. It is the life, the reflection of Christ in us, that really counts. This is a building above the foundation. It can be seen by people who may thereby glorify our Father.

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space if the statement is true. Write **F** if it is false.

-1 If the believer is to mature, he must do it entirely on his own without any active help from God.
-2 When the believer has established foundational truths, he must leave these truths and move on, building on them.
-3 A catechism is made up of the elementary points of Christian doctrine taught to new Christians.
-4 Repentance has to do mainly with an emotional feeling.
-5 Doctrine is an inner change of mind which brings about an outward turning back or turning around.
-6 An ordinance is a practice God has ordered the church to keep.
-7 There is no judgment for believers following their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

8–13 The believer’s foundation consists of three layers of two blocks each, as illustrated below. Please write, in the order of presentation in this course, the correct name for each block.

Pictures of the Future
 Practices in the Christian Life
 Conditions for becoming a Christian

12	13
10	11
8	9

Before you continue your study with Lesson 8, be sure to complete your unit student report for Unit 2 and return the answer sheet to your GU instructor.

answers to the study questions

- 1 We do.
- 12 c) Because he has not believed in God's only Son
- 2 The God of peace, in order that you may do His will
- 13 baptized, Spirit
- 3 c) Jesus Christ
- 14 Be baptized.
- 4 elementary teachings
- 15 The pledge or promise made to God from a good conscience
- 5 a) Repenting from useless works
- b) Believing in God
- c) Teaching about baptisms
- d) Teaching about laying on of hands
- e) Resurrection of the dead
- f) Eternal judgment
- 16 Physical healing and forgiveness of sins
- 6 He decided to go to his father.
- 17 b) Seven men to take charge of business
- 7 By getting up and going back to his father
- 18 The Holy Spirit
- 8 a) Turn away from their sins
- 19 Barnabas and Saul
- 9 Repent
- 20 Paul indicates that if we will not be raised to life, Christ has not been resurrected.
- 10 Their sins
- 21 A new birth into living hope
- 11 Eternal life





Proofs of Christian Maturity

Lessons

- 8 Evidence of Christian Character
- 9 Evidence of Useful Ministry
- 10 Evidence of Spiritual Transformation