STARTING FROM SCRATCH

Returning to the First Principles and Growing to Maturity

Surefooted Ministries Discipleship Teaching

Purpose of This Teaching

To help believers recognize when they have stopped growing spiritually, return to the foundational truths of God's Word, restore their devotion to God, and develop the habits needed to grow toward Christian maturity.

Foundation Scriptures

Hebrews 5:12–14 (TLB, as quoted in the source notes) teaches that believers should grow beyond the basics and learn to distinguish right from wrong by practicing what is right.

1 Peter 2:2–3 (TEV, as quoted in the source notes) encourages believers to desire pure spiritual milk so they can grow. The source notes describe "pure" (Strong's Greek #97, as recorded in the original notes) as sincere, unadulterated, not diluted, and at full strength.

Supporting Scripture: Matthew 5:13 — consider whether your life is continuing to have the influence Jesus calls His followers to have.

Central Truth

Returning to the basics is not failure when it becomes the beginning of renewed growth.

Spiritual milk is valuable and necessary for growth. The problem is not receiving foundational teaching; the problem is remaining dependent on the basics without moving toward deeper understanding, obedience, and maturity.

Teaching Outline

1. Recognize When You Need to Begin Again

Hebrews 5:12–14 describes believers who should have been teaching others but needed to be taught the first principles again. A person may need to revisit the foundations when devotion has cooled, spiritual habits have weakened, or growth has stalled.

- Ask honestly: Have I lost my first love for God?
- Have I neglected prayer, Scripture, obedience, or fellowship?
- Am I repeatedly struggling with things I once learned to handle through God's Word?
- Have I become satisfied with spiritual basics without applying them?

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2. Return to Pure Spiritual Nourishment

1 Peter 2:2–3 calls believers to desire pure spiritual milk. Return to the foundational truths of God's Word with a sincere heart. Rebuild your understanding through Scripture, prayer, and obedience. The goal is not to remain at the starting point, but to receive nourishment that helps you grow.

Teacher emphasis: Foundations are not disposable. They are the starting point on which continued growth is built.

3. Identify What Caused You to Get Off Track

It is helpful to discover when and how spiritual progress weakened. Look for patterns rather than making excuses. Recognize what changed, bring it honestly before God, and decide what needs to change.

- Which spiritual habits have I stopped practicing?
- What old pattern keeps pulling me away from obedience?
- What influences or distractions have taken priority over God?
- What truth do I know but need to begin practicing again?

4. Replace Old Patterns with New Habits

Starting again takes time and effort. Growth requires more than wishing things were different; it requires practical choices. Replace unhelpful patterns with habits that support spiritual health.

- Set a consistent time to read and study the Bible.
- Make prayer a regular practice, not only a response to trouble.
- Put God's Word into action in everyday decisions.
- Practice doing what is right, even when it is difficult.
- Review your progress and make adjustments when needed.

5. Seek Wise Help and Accountability

A trusted, mature mentor can help a believer recognize blind spots, return to foundational truths, and remain accountable. A mentor does not replace God's Word; a mentor helps the believer learn and apply it faithfully.

6. Move from Milk Toward Solid Food

Spiritual milk is good, but Hebrews 5 points toward maturity. Solid spiritual food involves growing in understanding, developing discernment, and consistently practicing God's truth. The evidence of growth is not simply knowing more; it is increasingly living what God teaches.

Believers who want to serve effectively and advance God's kingdom need spiritual strength. The original notes emphasize prayer, study, and sometimes the help of a personal trainer or mentor as part of that preparation.

Practical Application: Make God Your Treasure

If your first love has weakened, purpose in your heart to make God your greatest treasure again. Do not settle for spiritual stagnation. Return to the first principles, receive the Word sincerely, and take the next faithful step toward maturity.

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Personal Response Activity

Ask each learner to write brief answers to these questions:

1. Where have I noticed that my spiritual growth has slowed?
2. What foundational truth do I need to revisit?
3. What old habit or pattern must I change?
4. What new spiritual habit will I begin this week?
5. Who could provide wise encouragement or accountability?

Discussion Questions

6. According to Hebrews 5:12–14, what is the difference between knowing the basics and growing toward maturity?
7. Why is spiritual milk valuable, and why is it not meant to be our only spiritual nourishment?
8. How can practicing what is right help develop discernment?
9. Why can a mentor be helpful when someone is trying to regain lost spiritual ground?
10. What is one practical step that can help you begin growing again?

Closing Summary

Starting from scratch means returning to the foundations so that growth can begin again. Recognize where you got off track, renew your devotion to God, feed on His Word, change old patterns, form new habits, and seek wise help when needed. God desires His children to grow—not merely to begin well, but to continue toward maturity and become increasingly useful in His service.

Closing Prayer

Father, help me recognize where I have stopped growing or drifted from my first love. Give me a sincere desire for Your Word. Show me the patterns I need to change and the habits I need to build. Help me practice what is right, receive wise guidance, and grow toward maturity in Christ. Make my life fruitful and useful in Your service. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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