

Introduction

1. Every subject, skill or activity is based on certain basic principles called the fundamentals.
  - a. To make progress in the skill/subject you have to master the basic principles.
  - b. We understand this so well it is automatic in our thinking. Let's do a little exercise.
  - c. I will put up some basic principles and you tell me the subject, skill or activity.
  - d. Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division; (Show)<sup>1</sup> the Alphabet; (Show)<sup>2</sup>
  - e. Throwing, catching, running, hitting; (Show) Leo Durocher quote (Show)<sup>3</sup>
    - i. Every great player who ever played the game has mastered these basic principles.
    - ii. Key to maturing as a ballplayer is learning to do these extremely well.
2. **Question: Are there basic principles of Christianity that every believer should acquire?**
  - a. Yes. Just as a baseball player who neglects the fundamentals will never mature,...
  - b. So as a Christian we mature by learning and building on the first principles.
3. We have begun a discipleship ministry at Bethel called **The First Principles Series**. (Show)<sup>4</sup>
  - a. Very practical process for training believers in the basic principles of following Christ.
  - b. 2 booklets in series shown: **Becoming a Disciple, Passing On Your Beliefs**.
  - c. Chris Mauser led 2 training sessions to teach others how to lead 1<sup>st</sup> Principles groups.
  - d. So far 17 people have gone thru the training including 6 elders & both pastors.
  - e. Desire = multiply: people learning the 1<sup>st</sup> principles & other people leading them.
4. I began to wonder how clearly is this concept of the 1<sup>st</sup> Principles taught in Scripture?
  - I. **Terms for 1<sup>st</sup> Principles Used 5 Times in the New Testament.**
    - A. Arche Stoicheion
      1. Ache = archeology = study of beginnings or first cultures
      2. Original meaning = any first thing, from which the others belonging to some series take their rise, an element, first principal.<sup>5</sup>
      3. Translated: elementary principles, basic principles, elemental spirits, 1<sup>st</sup> principles.
    - B. (Gal. 4:3, 9; Col. 2:8, 20; Heb. 5:12)
  - II. **World's 1<sup>st</sup> Principles Are Contrasted with Christ's 1<sup>st</sup> Principles**
    - A. The World's 1<sup>st</sup> Principles
      1. Before Christ we were enslaved to the world's 1<sup>st</sup> principles, Gal. 4:3.
      2. World's 1<sup>st</sup> principles based on human philosophy & understanding alone, Col. 2:8.
      3. After Christ we should not go back to these weak/worthless 1<sup>st</sup> principles, Gal. 4:9.
        - a. Wasn't Jesus always doing this: contrasting world's principles w/Him?
        - b. Stand child before them. (Show)<sup>6</sup> Enter kingdom become like child, Mk.10:15.
        - c. World's leadership principles = lord it over. Greatest = least, Lk.9:46-48; 22:24-27.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.enthuseeducation.net/siteimages/maths%20symbols.jpg>. Math symbols. Accessed 1/19/17.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/pictures/40000/velka/alphabet-letters-clip-art-1364385276fGC.jpg>. 1/26/17.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.quotehd.com/imagequotes/authors82/tmb/leo-durocher-athlete-there-are-only-five-things-you-can-do-in.jpg>. Baseball fundamentals. Accessed 1/19/17.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.citychurchlawrence.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Screen-Shot-2016-11-20-at-12.16.27-PM.png>.

<sup>5</sup> Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship. #4747.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.lds.org/media-library/images/jesus-christ-children-1402594?lang=eng>. Accessed 1/26/17.

d. So easy go back how lived & been taught, to continue w/world's 1<sup>st</sup> principles.

### B. Christ's 1<sup>st</sup> Principles

1. Christian 1<sup>st</sup> principles are based upon the teaching about Christ, Col. 2:8.
2. All believers are expected to learn the "1<sup>st</sup> principles of God's Word." Heb. 5:12.<sup>7</sup>
3. Failure to grasp & remain convinced of the 1<sup>st</sup> principles will hinder Christian maturity & discernment (Heb. 5:12-6:1).

### III. **Three Applications from Hebrews 5:12-6:1**

#### A. Some People Waver with Uncertainty Over The 1<sup>st</sup> Principles, v. 12.

1. For many Hebrew Christians they were doubting what had been taught. Really true?
2. For us, we may waver cause don't know. Never been grounded in first principles.

#### B. Uncertainty About the 1<sup>st</sup> Principles Will Hinder Spiritual Maturity, vv. 12-13, 6:1.

1. Notice these not maturing. Remaining spiritual babes. Can't use what uncertain of.
2. Let us leave the elementary doctrine, 6:1 = not forget, but build on it.
3. If went into Karl Thomsen's Algebra class I would not expect to hear this:
  - a. Forget everything you know about addition, subtraction, multiplication, division.
  - b. We're moving on. No. Karl'd say we are going to build on those skills.
  - c. We are going to use the basic principles of Math every day as we learn Algebra.
4. When Pastor Hank coached the Marquette Reds Legion Ball team he never said:
  - a. Forget all you learned in Little League about throwing/catching/running/hitting.
  - b. We're moving on. No. P. Hank'd say we're going to build on those skills.
  - c. We're going to use basic principles every day to become Legion Ballplayers.
5. That's how Christian life is. To move on we build on the foundation laid.
6. If our foundation is shaky, uncertain or wavering we can't move on.

#### C. Building On The Basic Principles Engages Personal Discovery & Practice, v. 14.

1. Isn't this what we all want? We want to be mature, discerning Christians.
  - a. We want to be able to have wisdom in distinguishing good from evil.
  - b. What parent doesn't want be more discerning parent for good of our children?
  - c. What leader not be a wiser leader at Bethel for the good of the body?
  - d. What married person not more discerning w/spouse for health of our marriage?
2. We all want this. In every way. Notice what is required for what we all want?
  - a. Practice = process of learning a skill until it is acquired. Maturity is a process.
  - b. Takes process to grow. Trained = gymnasium;<sup>8</sup> All know do in gym. Exercise be fit.
  - c. Maturity takes spiritual exercise so that our souls become fit w/godly wisdom.
3. Conclude with quote from Teaching the 1<sup>st</sup> Principles, p. 28. (Show)<sup>9</sup> Do 2 things:
  - a. Pray for us.<sup>10</sup>
  - b. Ask, does God want me to do something with the 1<sup>st</sup> Principles?

<sup>7</sup> *The Amplified New Testament*. (1987). La Habra, CA: Zondervan; The Lockman Foundation. (Hebrews 5:12).

<sup>8</sup> Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship. #1128.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.shaulpage.com/?p=223>. Accessed 1/26/17.

<sup>10</sup> That God will help every believer at Bethel to have a solid foundation that leads to growing maturity.