

FROM MILK TO MATURITY

A seven-day meditation on love, spiritual gifts, and training your senses

Companion Bible study and homework | Ravi Kandal

Central question: What if the emotions that have taught me to retreat could become invitations to seek the Holy Spirit's wisdom, love, and gifts?

How to use this guide. Work through Parts 1–3 at your own pace early in the week. Then use the Seven Days pages: one short reading, one practice, and a three-minute Daily Training review each evening. Maturity in Hebrews 5:14 comes “by reason of use,” through repeated practice, so small daily steps matter more than long sessions.

PART 1 | RECOGNIZE WHAT HAS BEEN TEACHING YOU

Read: Hebrews 5:11–6:2

The writer of Hebrews has much more to teach, but the hearers have grown **dull of hearing** (5:11). They should be teachers by now, yet they still need milk: the elementary foundations listed in 6:1–2, such as repentance, faith, baptisms, the laying on of hands, resurrection, and judgment. These foundations are good and necessary, but they are meant to be built on, not endlessly relaid.

Notice what maturity is in 5:14. It is not simply knowing more. The mature have had their **senses trained** through practice to recognize good and evil. The word for “trained” is the root of our word *gymnasium*. Discernment is exercised, like a muscle.

One way our hearing grows dull is that painful emotions quietly become our teachers. Fear may teach us to withdraw; sadness may teach us to lower our expectations; disappointment may teach us not to ask again. Emotions are not the enemy. Jesus wept, and the Psalms are full of honest lament. The question is not whether we feel, but **who is teaching our expectations**. Rather than condemning those responses, begin by noticing what you have learned to expect.

When I feel weak, rejected, afraid, or disappointed, what do I immediately expect?

What emotion has been teaching me how to respond to people or circumstances?

Where has my spiritual hearing grown dull? Where have I stopped expecting God to work through me because I am focused on what is happening to me?

Meditate: My past may explain what I have learned to expect, but it does not have to determine everything I will become.

LOVE GIVES OUR DESIRE PURPOSE

PART 2 | PURSUE LOVE AND DESIRE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 31; 13; 14:1

Paul places his teaching on love between his discussions of spiritual gifts. Love is not a substitute for the gifts, and the gifts are not a substitute for love. Without love, even impressive gifts amount to nothing (13:1-3). With love, the gifts become tools for building people up. We seek the Holy Spirit's gifts so that others may be encouraged, strengthened, and comforted.

The gifts at a glance (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

Paul names a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. All are given by the same Spirit, distributed as He wills, and given **for the common good** (12:7).

Paul especially encourages us to desire prophecy (14:1), which he describes as speaking to people for their **strengthening, encouragement, and comfort** (14:3). That is a safe and simple place for anyone to begin.

Slow Scripture meditation: Read 1 Corinthians 14:1 three times. On the first reading, consider what it means to *pursue love*. On the second, consider what it means to *desire spiritual gifts*. On the third, ask how those desires can serve another person.

Have fear or disappointment weakened my desire for the gifts of the Spirit? How?

Which gift would most help the people around me right now, and why?

Whom could I love more intentionally this week? What might that love look like in action?

A word of care. Some disappointments are deep wounds, not just habits of thought. If Part 1 stirred up more than you expected, you do not have to carry it alone. Bring it to a pastor, leader, or trusted friend this week. Healing often comes through the body of Christ, not only in private reflection.

PART 3 | PARTNER WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Read: John 14:26 and 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Meditation is not denying an emotion or forcing a feeling. It is returning our attention to Scripture, remembering what God has said, and inviting the Holy Spirit to teach us a faithful response. Jesus promised that the Spirit would teach us and bring His words to our remembrance. And Paul learned that God's grace is enough, and that His power is made perfect in weakness. Our inadequacy is not a barrier to the Spirit's work; it is often the very place He works.

Guided meditation: Read slowly, pausing between each sentence.

- I recognize what I am feeling. I do not need to hide or condemn it.
- I recognize what this emotion has taught me to expect.
- Holy Spirit, You are my Teacher. Bring Your Word to my remembrance.
- Where I feel weak or inadequate, Your grace is enough, and Your power can rest on me.
- Teach my senses to recognize what is good.
- Where fear has narrowed my attention, teach me to notice opportunities for love.
- Where disappointment has weakened my desire, awaken my longing for Your gifts.
- I want to pursue love, desire spiritual gifts, and strengthen others.

LISTEN AND RESPOND: A FIRST STEP IN THE GIFTS

This simple practice moves desire into experience. You will use it on Day 4 and Day 6.

- 1. Quiet yourself.** Take a few slow breaths. Pray the guided meditation above.
- 2. Ask.** "Holy Spirit, whom do You want to encourage through me today? What would strengthen, encourage, or comfort them?"
- 3. Write it down.** Note the person and whatever comes to mind: a verse, a picture, a phrase, or a simple sense of what they need. Don't overthink it.
- 4. Test it.** Does it agree with Scripture? Is it loving? Would it build them up rather than pressure or shame them? (1 Corinthians 14:3, 29; 1 Thessalonians 5:21)
- 5. Share it humbly.** For example: "I was praying for you and this came to mind. I hope it encourages you." No need for dramatic language. Let love set the tone.
- 6. Reflect.** What happened? What did you notice? This is how your senses are trained.

If nothing seems to come, that is not failure. Ask what kindness this person needs, and offer that. Love is always a faithful response, and the gifts grow as we practice.

SEVEN DAYS OF MEDITATION & PRACTICE

Return to the same central invitation each day. Read the passage, meditate on it slowly, practice one response, and end with the Daily Training review.

DAILY TRAINING: TRAINING YOUR SENSES (Hebrews 5:14)

Each evening, take three minutes with these four questions. Repeating them every day is what turns this study into practice.

1. Where did I notice something good today?
2. Where did I sense the Holy Spirit's nudge, and how did I respond?
3. Where did an old emotion take the lead before I noticed it?
4. What will I practice tomorrow?

[] DAY 1 - Recognize the old teacher (Hebrews 5:11-14)

Notice one emotion that shapes your expectations. Name what it has taught you, and ask the Holy Spirit to begin retraining that expectation.

Evening review: [] noticed good [] responded to a nudge [] caught an old response

[] DAY 2 - Remember who teaches you (John 14:26)

When an old response appears, pause and ask the Holy Spirit to bring a Scripture to mind. Write it on a card and keep it with you.

Evening review: [] noticed good [] responded to a nudge [] caught an old response

[] DAY 3 - Let love lead your desire (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

Think of one person you find difficult to love. Choose one specific act of patience or kindness toward them today, and do it.

Evening review: [] noticed good [] responded to a nudge [] caught an old response

[] DAY 4 - Desire gifts that serve (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 31; 14:1)

Practice Listen and Respond (Part 3) for one person. Write down what you sensed, even if it seems small.

Evening review: [] noticed good [] responded to a nudge [] caught an old response

[] DAY 5 - Recognize strength in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

When you feel inadequate, take one small faithful step anyway. Afterward, note what God's grace looked like in that moment.

Evening review: [] noticed good [] responded to a nudge [] caught an old response

[] DAY 6 - Build someone up (1 Corinthians 14:3, 12, 26)

Encourage, comfort, or strengthen someone. If you received something on Day 4 that passed the test, share it humbly.

Evening review: [] noticed good [] responded to a nudge [] caught an old response

[] DAY 7 - Become a learner who can teach (Hebrews 5:12-6:1)

Explain one insight from this week to someone else. Decide which practice you will keep going.

Evening review: [] noticed good [] responded to a nudge [] caught an old response

What changed in my expectations, desires, or responses this week?

PREPARE TO SHARE

HOMework FOR THE NEXT NURTURING WISDOM GATHERING

Read: Hebrews 5:11–6:2 and 1 Corinthians chapters 12, 13, and 14. Choose one short verse from these chapters, memorize it, and ask what God is highlighting through it. Come prepared to share your verse and what you are learning.

My chosen Scripture and reference:

What did I recognize about my emotions or expectations?

How is my desire to pursue love and the gifts of the Holy Spirit growing?

My Listen and Respond experience: what did I sense, what did I share, and what happened?

What is one practical way I can strengthen or encourage another person?

At the gathering, we will share in pairs and pray for one another, so you can practice encouraging others in a safe setting.

THE WEEK'S CENTRAL MEDITATION

I will pursue love and desire the gifts of the Spirit.

I will not allow fear, disappointment, or weakness to become the only teachers of my expectations.

Where I am weak, His grace is enough.

The Holy Spirit is training my senses to recognize what is good, to grow in wisdom, and to strengthen others.

Scripture focus: Hebrews 5:14 | 1 Corinthians 14:1 | John 14:26 | 2 Corinthians 12:9