

# Instant or Delayed Gratification?

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delayed gratification, how much more do you think these things are true regarding **spiritual things**? Well, you guessed it! It's near impossible to interest people in America with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They have a very difficult time in seeing that far into the future! Talk about sin and righteousness, heaven and hell, pleasing an invisible God or Satan, and in a few minutes you will see people hitting the mental snooze button! It just seems like a dream to them and they do not have the mental maturity and development to see down the road to the end of life. This can be changed, but the question is whether or not people want to change.

The apostle Paul said, "...When I became a man, I put away childish things." In order to obtain heaven, Americans are going to have to grow up a bit. Let's consider a few biblical statements along this line.

## Future Bliss

Paul also wrote, "*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*" (Rom. 8:18). Paul was willing to suffer persecution in this lifetime in order to obtain the eternal glory that awaited him. This is the ultimate choice of "delayed gratification."

Paul is not alone in his example either. Consider Moses' choice when he came to adulthood. He chose to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, Hebrews 11:24-25. Moses made the mature choice and showed his mental and spiritual maturity that made him the great spiritual leader of his day! Can you do that?

Now we might ask what made Paul and Moses so different? The key to their maturity was their faith. Their faith in the *invisible, eternal life to come and the great God and Creator of all mankind* was so strong that they could see them as well as we see the noonday sun! We see this **faith** in the statement of Hebrews 11:3 — "**By faith** we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." Mature, logical, reasonable thinking comes to this conclusion. Faith in God is the only reasonable choice when it comes to the study of origins. But men who want their cake now will believe and teach the most foolish notions to justify their own desire for "instant gratification." But this is nothing new. It has *nearly* always been this way.

## The Road To Maturity

Now if you decided to choose to be like Moses, Paul and Abraham, how would you go about developing mental maturity?

- **Think soberly and independently.** You cannot let the world decide your future for you. The majority of people in the world are going to die and lose their eternal souls. You must choose the road less traveled, Matthew 7:13-14.
- **Study carefully God's Word.** We know faith comes by hearing God's Word (Romans 10:17), but we have to take the time to read, reflect, and meditate upon this message. We have to revere it as the very words of our eternal Creator (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We have to make a personal application from what we learn and become men of faith like those in Hebrews 11.
- **Be willing to sacrifice.** It is one thing to **say** that the future reward of an eternal heaven is worth it, and it is something altogether different to make such a belief your way of life. Read Philippians 3:7-14 to see how Paul sacrificed everything in his life to obtain the eternal reward. And notice how ironic it is that the very next words of inspiration say this: "*Therefore let us, as many as are **mature**, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you*" (v. 15).
- **Be steadfast and immovable.** Thousands who followed Moses in the wilderness died because they did not have the faith to trust and obey. Fear and immaturity led them to their deaths, 1 Corinthians 10:1-12. Don't give up!

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