



Priesthood of The Believer

A priest is a member of the human race who represents human beings before God, male or female. A priest must have the same nature as those they represent or act on behalf of. Heb. 5:1-3; Heb. 5:4-6; Heb. 10:5; Heb. 7:28.

"For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself." (Hebrews 5:1-3, NASB)

"And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"; just as He says also in another passage, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."'" (Hebrews 5:4-6, NASB)

"Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;" (Hebrews 10:5, NASB)

"For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever." (Hebrews 7:28, NASB)

In the Old Testament, the priest represented people before God in more of a legal function. In the Church Age, every believer is a royal priest and therefore each has the right to represent themselves before God. 1 Peter 2:9.

"But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;" (1 Peter 2:9, NASB)

Categories of Priesthood

In the Old Testament there were three categories of priesthood - the Patriarchal or Family priesthood, the King-Priest, and the Levitical priesthood of Israel. In the Church Age, there is only one priesthood - the universal priesthood of all believers.

The Old Testament Patriarchal or Family Priesthood

In the patriarchal or family priesthood, the patriarch of the family functioned as the priest for the family. This priesthood functioned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses. Examples of this priesthood are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The patriarch of each family built altars and offered sacrifices, and in so doing purified and consecrated themselves and their households before God. Gen. 12:7; Gen. 13:18; Gen. 22:9; Gen. 26:25; Gen. 33:20; Gen. 35:1-2.

"The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him." (Genesis 12:7, NASB)

"Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD." (Genesis 13:18, NASB)

"So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well." (Genesis 26:25, NASB)



"Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and live there, and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau." So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves and change your garments;" (Genesis 35:1-2, NASB)

The Old Testament King-Priest

The Old Testament king-priest is represented by Melchizedek who was a king, the head of his family, and a priest. He was a Gentile believer-priest living in the time of Abraham. He was the king of Salem, which later became the city of Jerusalem. He was both a king and a priest. His genealogy was not relevant to his priesthood. Heb. 7:1-3.

"For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually." (Hebrews 7:1-3, NASB)

Melchizedek was a "type" or "shadow" in the Old Testament of Jesus Christ who would become the reality as the Messiah, our Savior. Each was a human being, a king, and a priest. The humanity of each were superior to Abraham as the father of the Jewish race and both Jesus Christ and Melchizedek had no priestly genealogies related to Israel. Their priesthood was not based on their physical birth. Melchizedek was a priest perpetually because he was a believer with eternal life. Heb. 7:3; Heb. 7:12-16; Heb. 7:17.

"Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually." (Hebrews 7:3, NASB)

"For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life." (Hebrews 7:12-16, NASB)

"For it is attested of Him, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK." (Hebrews 7:17, NASB)

Melchizedek's priesthood was superior to Abraham because Melchizedek ministered to him and blessed him because he was a king-priest. Abraham also gave tithes to Melchizedek. Abraham was only a priest, but not a king. Heb. 7:9-11.

"And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?" (Hebrews 7:9-11, NASB)

This means that the universal priesthood of the Church Age believer is far greater than the Levitical priesthood. The Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament was based on genealogy while the royal priesthood of the Church Age is based solely on faith belief in the work of Jesus Christ. Rev. 1:6.



“and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (Revelation 1:6, NASB)

The Old Testament Levitical Priesthood of Israel

The Old Testament Levitical priesthood of Israel is limited to the Jewish Age and will be functional again in the Millennium. The Levitical priesthood was based their genealogy. In Numbers 16:5, Aaron was chosen by God along with the tribe of Levi.

“and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, “Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who is His, and who is holy, and will bring him near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose, He will bring near to Himself.” (Numbers 16:5, NASB)

The spiritual function of this priesthood was related to ritual and to the teaching the Word of God. Heb. 10:1-4.

“For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” (Hebrews 10:1-4, NASB)

The Church Age Universal Priesthood of All Believers

In the dispensation of the Church Age, there is only one priesthood, which is the universal royal priesthood of all believers. Our priesthood is patterned after Melchizedek. Jesus Christ is our high priest. Old Testament priesthoods were specialized priesthoods. In the Church Age, all believers in Jesus Christ are priests and represent themselves directly to God without any intermediary. Heb. 5:9-10.

“And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.” (Hebrews 5:9-10, NASB)

Our Lord was appointed a royal high priest by divine decree in eternity past and at His resurrection, ascension, and session. Therefore, Jesus Christ is a king-priest after the order of Melchizedek. All believers are in eternal union with Him and therefore share His kingship and His priesthood forever.

Functions of the Priesthood

Confession of Sin

The first function of the Church Age believer's priesthood is confession of sin directly to God the Father. Confession of sin is not part of the spiritual life, but is required to enter your spiritual life and engage the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. Church Age believers represent themselves before God the Father while living on earth. As believer-priests, they are responsible for initiating confession of sin. They represents themselves in carnality and are responsible for their own actions in life. They are to name or cite their known sins directly to God the Father in prayer to recover fellowship with God and to be filled with the Holy Spirit. 1 John 1:9; 1 Cor. 11:31; Rom. 14:4; Rom. 14:10.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9, NASB)

“But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.” (1 Corinthians 11:31, NASB)



“Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.” (Romans 14:4, NASB)

“But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.” (Romans 14:10, NASB)

In the Old Testament, the confession of sin offerings were public and everything was public knowledge. They went to the priest and he represented them. In the Church Age, every believer is a priest and represent themselves directly to God the Father without an intermediary like the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament.

On earth, each believer must represent themselves. In heaven, we are represented by our high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, He is our defense attorney. This is part of your privacy of your priesthood. 1 John 2:1-2.

“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” (1 John 2:1-2, NASB)

Spiritual Growth

A second major function as a believer-priest is to learn Bible doctrine on a daily basis. Making the daily intake and application of Bible doctrine your number one priority in life is critical to spiritual growth. God the Holy Spirit empowers your spiritual life and allows you to understand and then believe the Bible doctrine taught by your pastor-teacher. Only through spiritual growth and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit can your royal priesthood function as God intended and therefore glorify Him.

Emotion and enthusiasm just won't carry you in the spiritual life. It is temporary and does not cause spiritual growth. Emotionalism short-circuits objective thinking which is required to function and grow in the spiritual life. Emotions are to be the appreciators of the grace blessings bestowed on us by God. Luke 8:13-14.

“Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.” (Luke 8:13-14, NASB)

The most consistent believers in the world are those who attend Bible class regardless of what else is going on in their lives. Like everybody else, they have problems. But unlike everybody else, they work out their problems using God's divine solutions. Without consistent Bible doctrine intake, you will try your human solutions and end up back in your old problems. People can be consistent even though they have pressures.

The priesthood is tailor-made to handle trouble that comes your way. All believers have problems, but using your priesthood takes care of the old problems and anticipates that new problems will be solved. Believers not functioning under Bible doctrine keep revisiting their old problems.

Every believer has a responsibility to test themselves to see if they understand Bible doctrine and to evaluate whether they are in a state of sin or not. Every believer determines their own status spiritually. The spiritual life is a private matter between the believer and God. Each of us must take the responsibility to evaluate and correct ourselves when found to be wrong. 2 Cor. 13:5.

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about



yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?” (2 Corinthians 13:5, NASB)

Prayer and Intercession

The third major function of the priesthood is prayer and intercession. Being a priest, however, does not make you a good prayer warrior. Who has the right to pray and go directly to the throne of grace? Any believer because every Church Age believer is a priest. Don't read a prayer unless you wrote it yourself and are in fellowship. We are to pray with a consistent frequency following confession of sin to ensure your prayers are heard by God the Father. Heb. 4:16.

“Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16, NASB)

Every believer-priest is to perform certain spiritual functions. This is taken from the functions of the Levitical priesthood, but very different for the Church Age believer. Heb. 13:18.

“Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.” (Hebrews 13:18, NASB)

Spiritual Sacrifices

The priesthood is universal to all Church Age believers and is localized. In 1 Peter 2:5, “to offer up spiritual sacrifices” is the aorist active infinitive of ἀναφέρω (anapherō) and means to offer again and again. It is the purpose of the believer-priest to offer up sacrifices again and again. “Spiritual” is πνευματικός (pneumatikos) and stresses that these are spiritual sacrifices, not animal sacrifices for the dispensation of the Church Age. Spiritual sacrifices can only be accomplished through the filling of the Holy Spirit. “Acceptable to God” is εὐπρόσδεκτος (euprosdektos) and is a compound triple adjective and means acceptable, well pleasing, to be well pleased, receiving face to face gladly. Spiritual sacrifices are well pleasing to God the Father. This is the spiritual service which is the living and holy sacrifice of the believer-priest of Romans 12:1. Guilt complex, breast beating and emotional revolt of the soul cause a false priesthood to function in the carnal believer.

“you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5, NASB)

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” (Romans 12:1, NASB)

These spiritual sacrifices involve the believer-priest listening to that which praises God, which is the Word. The Word is designed to honor God. This results in the production of divine good and function of your spiritual gifts. All spiritual sacrifices require the filling of the Holy Spirit. In Hebrews 13:15, “sacrifice of praise” refers to the believer's identification with Jesus Christ in His person.

“Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.” (Hebrews 13:15, NASB)

Believers should have a giving mental attitude with overt giving resulting from that grace mental attitude. In Hebrews 13:16, “doing good” refers to the activity of the spiritual life where the believer identifies with Jesus Christ in His walk. This is wise speech and wise activity that produces divine good through the filling of the Spirit. “Doing good and sharing” is the believer's identification with Jesus Christ in His giving.

“And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” (Hebrews 13:16,



NASB)

Spiritual sacrifices also involve authority orientation to those placed in authority over you and prayer. This is the greatest function of the priesthood. The believer priest is to be in obedience to the teaching of the pastor-teacher in the local church. This is authority orientation to divinely-delegated authority. The pastor-teacher carries authority. This authority orientation extends to all divinely delegated authority within the society you live in based on the written laws of that society and nation. Authority orientation is not designed to shame you or exploit you, but for your protection. Heb. 13:17.

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:17, NASB)

The priesthood on earth is organized on the basis of spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are supernatural enablement given to believers in Jesus Christ to grow and equip the Body of Christ "for the work of service" in the Church Age. Spiritual gifts are grace gifts from God and are part of God's grace resources provided to enable the believer grow spiritually. In growing spiritually, the unbelieving world is evangelized resulting in the expansion of the Body of Christ. Believers are to function as members the Body of Christ and to produce divine good thus glorifying God and fulfilling the plan of God for their lives. Eph. 4:12-13; Eph. 4:16.

"for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12-13, NASB)

"from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." (Ephesians 4:16, NASB)

Spiritual sacrifices also involve witnessing to the unbeliever. Church Age believers are ambassadors for Jesus Christ on earth and we are to represent and reflect the very thinking of Jesus Christ in our spiritual life on earth. 1 Cor. 2:16.

"For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Corinthians 2:16, NASB)

The objective is not to lead the unbeliever to Christ, but to accurately give them the Gospel information so they can make a decision. You should understand the doctrines of reconciliation, propitiation, redemption, imputation, justification, regeneration, and expiation. You must have this *epignosis* doctrine information in your soul. Witnessing for Jesus Christ is the responsibility of every believer. Acts 1:8; 2 Tim. 4:5.

"but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8, NASB)

"But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." (2 Timothy 4:5, NASB)

The Ministry of the Believer-Priest

The Angelic Conflict must be understood from the standpoint of ascension. Hebrews 1-2. The humanity of Jesus Christ in resurrection body was qualified to be seated in heaven. Jesus Christ was the only one



qualified to be seated. The Angelic Conflict tries to keep unbelievers unsaved and to keep believers from maturing spiritually.

The priesthood of Jesus Christ is the most stabilizing fellowship doctrine in all of Scripture. In Hebrews 3:1-2, “holy brethren” means set apart. “A heavenly calling” means objective righteousness and doing what is right in God’s eyes. “Consider” means to reflect, analyze, meditate, getting rank in hand, to recognize authority. “He was faithful” refers to Jesus Christ who is greater than Moses.

“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house.” (Hebrews 3:1-2, NASB)

In Hebrews 3:3-4, “the builder of the house” refers to the believer who builds according to the Word of God.

“For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.” (Hebrews 3:3-4, NASB)

In Hebrews 3:5, “servant” is θεράπων (therapōn) and means an attendant, a servant of God, spoken of Moses discharging the duties committed to him by God.

“Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later;” (Hebrews 3:5, NASB)

One of the greatest hazards of becoming an active, mature, believer-priest is listening to Bible doctrine but not concentrating on what you are hearing. In Hebrews 3:7-8, “do not harden your hearts” refers to the buildup of soul scar tissue. “When they provoked Me” means they were griping, murmuring, and complaining.

“Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS,” (Hebrews 3:7-8, NASB)

Another hazard in the spiritual life is rejection of daily intake and application of Bible doctrine. This is making something else a higher priority in your life. In doing so, you take that something more seriously than the Word of God. This will cause the believer to fall short of spiritual maturity and consistent divine good production. Faith is simply believing God’s Word which is more real to you than the world in which you live. Heb. 3:12-13.

“Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” (Hebrews 3:12-13, NASB)

The Believer’s Sacrifices

A sacrifice is defined as an offering made to God to procure favor, show dependence upon, to express thanks, or to avoid disaster. The dearest thing to any human being is their own personal viewpoint. The greatest sacrifice a believer can make is that of their own personal viewpoint in order to agree with God’s divine viewpoint. The priesthood of the believer functions volitionally within the Divine Institutions - Volition, Marriage, Family, and Nationalism.

It is much better to obey God's mandates immediately (prevention) and apply *epignosis* Bible doctrine to



life's situations than to sacrifice that will require confession of sin later. Examples are Samuel and Saul in 1 Samuel 15:22.

"Samuel said, 'Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.'" (1 Samuel 15:22, NASB)

There are sacrifices of righteousness. Psalms 51:19; Psalms 4:5; Deut. 33:19; Mal. 3:3; Heb. 11:4.

"Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar." (Psalms 51:19, NASB)

"'They will call peoples to the mountain; There they will offer righteous sacrifices; For they will draw out the abundance of the seas, And the hidden treasures of the sand.'" (Deuteronomy 33:19, NASB)

"Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And trust in the LORD." (Psalms 4:5, NASB)

"By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks." (Hebrews 11:4, NASB)

There are sacrifices of thanksgiving. Psalms 116:17; Amos 4:5; Psalms 50:14.

"To You I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, And call upon the name of the LORD." (Psalms 116:17, NASB)

"'Offer a thank offering also from that which is leavened, And proclaim freewill offerings, make them known. For so you love to do, you sons of Israel,' Declares the Lord GOD." (Amos 4:5, NASB)

"'Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving And pay your vows to the Most High;" (Psalms 50:14, NASB)

There are sacrifices of prayer. Rev. 8:3; Heb. 5:7.

"Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne." (Revelation 8:3, NASB)

"In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety." (Hebrews 5:7, NASB)

There are sacrifices of praise and joy. Jer. 33:11; Jer. 13:15-16; Psalms 50:23; Psalms 27:6.

"the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who say, 'Give thanks to the LORD of hosts, For the LORD is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting'; and of those who bring a thank offering into the house of the LORD. For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were at first," says the LORD." (Jeremiah 33:11, NASB)

"Listen and give heed, do not be haughty, For the LORD has spoken. Give glory to the LORD your God, Before He brings darkness And before your feet stumble On the dusky mountains, And while you are hoping for light He makes it into deep darkness, And turns it into gloom." (Jeremiah 13:15-16, NASB)

"'He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God.'" (Psalms 50:23, NASB)

"And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me, And I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD." (Psalms 27:6, NASB)



The believer's life or body is a living and holy sacrifice. Rom. 12:1; Phil. 2:17; Psalms 51:17; 2 Tim. 4:6.

"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." (Romans 12:1, NASB)

"But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all." (Philippians 2:17, NASB)

"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come." (2 Timothy 4:6, NASB)

There are better sacrifices in Hebrews 9:23 and continual sacrifices in Hebrews 10:1.

"Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." (Hebrews 9:23, NASB)

"For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near." (Hebrews 10:1, NASB)

There are spiritual sacrifices of the holy priesthood. 1 Peter 2:5; Heb. 8:3.

"you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5, NASB)

"For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer." (Hebrews 8:3, NASB)

The Priesthood and Spiritual Maturity

The priesthood of the believer operates on the basis of the intake and application of Bible doctrine functioning under the grace apparatus for perception. The priesthood of the believer operates on the freedom to exercise positive volition toward use of God's grace resources in the spiritual life. This freedom comes from the capacity given by *epignosis* Bible doctrine in the right lobe of the soul. As the believer matures, the edification complex of the soul is erected from the accumulation of *epignosis* Bible doctrine. Heb. 3:1 through Heb. 4:16; Heb. 6:15.

"And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise." (Hebrews 6:15, NASB)

In Psalms 23:5, "My cup overflows" refers to the mature believer. Also, communion is said to identify with a "cup of blessing" in 1 Corinthians 10:16. This cup overflows in refreshing the needs of others. Water out of the rock - in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, we have "all drank the same spiritual drink" which refers to belief in the Rock, Jesus Christ for salvation.

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows." (Psalms 23:5, NASB)

"Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16, NASB)

"For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ." (1 Corinthians 10:1-4, NASB)



The spiritually maturing believer has maximum freedom to express their priesthood in wise planning and redeeming the little time we have on this earth by consistently learning Bible doctrine that reveals God's plan for our lives. James 4:14-15; Gal. 4:8-9; Gal. 4:13-14.

"Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.'" (James 4:14-15, NASB)

"However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?" (Galatians 4:8-9, NASB)

"but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself." (Galatians 4:13-14, NASB)

The spiritually maturing believer must gain a practical understanding of leadership authority. The believer must become authority oriented to understand the functions of their priesthood. Heb. 12:25; Heb. 13:7; Heb. 13:17.

"See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven." (Hebrews 12:25, NASB)

"Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith." (Hebrews 13:7, NASB)

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:17, NASB)

The Church Age believer-priest must learn grace and gain a gratitude for God's grace blessings and to depend on God's grace resources to live the spiritual life. Heb. 12:28.

"Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;" (Hebrews 12:28, NASB)

The spiritually maturing believer must make their top priority the daily assembly to hear face to face teaching of Bible doctrine. The mature believer-priest gains a true understanding of academic intake and a true understanding of belief followed by application. Heb. 10:25.

"not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:25, NASB)

There is a bias in the old sin nature which wants to spurn God's grace and go back to the ways of the unbeliever in carnality and even reversionism. Gal. 3:1-3.

"You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Galatians 3:1-3, NASB)

The believer's priesthood is based on faith in the revealed Word of God as taught in the local church by



their pastor-teacher. Heb. 11:6.

“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6, NASB)

The priesthood of the believer includes a true understanding of suffering - deserved and undeserved. Heb. 12:1-2; Heb. 12:3; Heb. 12:7-8; Heb. 12:10-11.

“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-2, NASB)

“For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” (Hebrews 12:3, NASB)

“It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.” (Hebrews 12:7-8, NASB)

“For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.” (Hebrews 12:10-11, NASB)

Spiritual maturity results in the function of your spiritual gift(s) whether you realize it or not. Heb. 10:23-24.

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,” (Hebrews 10:23-24, NASB)

In the Old Testament, a priest was always very involved in overt activity. He was always in contact with people, ministering to others. Heb. 5:1-2.

“For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness;” (Hebrews 5:1-2, NASB)

Old Testament priests always functioned on a daily basis. They always knew what to do and were mature spiritually. A priest functioned volitionally although under commandments. Every priestly function in the Old Testament has its grace fulfillment today. The Church Age believer in spiritual maturity has developed divine norms and standards so the volition has something objective on which to operate.

The mature believer-priest will endure, retain the status quo in rough going, and never make hasty decisions of a geographical nature. The mature believer-priest has maximum skill in tying together the divine institutions with basic and more advanced doctrines. The mature believer has excellent insight in freedom in personal, family and national living. The mature believer has excellent spiritual leadership in marriage and family. The mature believer also has an uncanny sense of discernment in the matter of voting, taxation, politics, and governmental decisions.

The spiritually mature believer-priest does a maximum amount of time thinking and a minimum amount



of time talking. The greatest sacrifice a believer can make is that of their own personal viewpoint in order to agree with God's viewpoint. Why? The dearest thing to any human being is their own personal viewpoint. James 1:19.

"This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;" (James 1:19, NASB)

Every believer in the Church Age is a believer priest, male, female, regardless of spiritual gift, regardless of growth, but only functions properly in maturity. A believer-priest has maximum balance between academic intake and application intent. You cannot apply what you do not know. Ignorance has no premium with God. 1 Cor. 12:1.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware." (1 Corinthians 12:1, NASB)

To know something you must find someone who knows something. Seek a qualified and prepared pastor-teacher who will teach you Bible doctrine. The spiritual learning process moves from the known to the unknown. New knowledge is built on old knowledge or understood knowledge. 1 Cor. 12:2-3.

"You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led. Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus is accursed'; and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:2-3, NASB)

You do not learn truth Bible doctrine merely to fill up the mind with facts, but to use and apply what is learned. When you live in the Word or function under the grace apparatus for perception, spiritual phenomena or facts in the human spirit are transferred by the Holy Spirit to the left lobe of the mentality of the soul. Then, the believer must believe that understood Bible doctrine (*gnosis*) before the Holy Spirit can then transfer it to the right lobe of the soul or the heart as *epignosis* Bible doctrine now ready for erecting the edification complex of the soul and application to life.

Otherwise, the Word of God becomes manna that is not gathered for use. Manna given by God. Manna on the ground. Manna gathered. Manna in the tent. Manna in the mouth. If the Word of God is treated as human knowledge, human facts, then it puffs up becoming only an academic detail of life.

In 1 Corinthians 8:1, "makes arrogant" is the present active indicative of φουσιόω (*phusioō*) and means bellows, to inflate, to puff up, a term for false growth. It refers to a mental attitude not compatible with the thinking of God. *Phusioō* is always used in the bad sense in the Scriptures and refers to false religious production that is inconsistent. *Phusioō* is used of believers who prostitute doctrines and production which, in turn produces a false similarity to true Christian living. This puffed-up concept expressed itself in mental attitude, word, and deed.

"Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies." (1 Corinthians 8:1, NASB)

A structure built on human concepts of Scripture, ethics and peer evaluation is a false concept of spiritual growth. It is a growth built upon academic facts with no Holy Spirit transfer to the right lobe of the soul. There is no *epignosis* Bible doctrine for application. It results in a self-righteous believer that thinks quite highly of themselves with a large amount of program, hustle, and nervousness. The filling of the Holy Spirit is God's absolute standard for true spiritual growth. Proper application of the Word is always having its proper impact in the work-a-day world. 1 Cor. 8:3; Rom. 8:28.

"but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him." (1 Corinthians 8:3, NASB)



“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28, NASB)

The doctrine of the priesthood of the believer is important to understand from salvation and onward to spiritual maturity. It is the Bible doctrine that ties us to practical Christian living. 1 Peter 2:1-2; 1 Peter 2:5.

“Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,” (1 Peter 2:1-2, NASB)

“you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5, NASB)

God’s Plan for the Believer’s Stability

God's truth is an absolute. Therefore, grace is an absolute. Spiritual growth is true progress. Spiritual maturity is the highest goal in life. People are born again equal with the same spiritual provisions. Grace friendships are very important and are formed by grace function through fellowship.

The majority is not always right, nor is the minority always wrong. Divine establishment stands as an absolute toward crime. Warfare will always exist until the Millennium. Each nation must be self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing, with maximum freedom, privacy and prosperity. The earth's resources are to be used, but not abused.

The spiritually maturing believer learns and applies Bible doctrine through the grace apparatus for perception resulting in application to life using the filling of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God teaches how the believer can relax in the promises of God. They can handle the pressures of life that come using God's grace resources. The maturing believer progressively measures up in the Angelic Conflict as a witness for Jesus Christ. Such believers can remain patient and calm in the storms of life confident of God's promises and His grace provision.

The spiritually maturing believer daily approaches God the Father in prayer confident of the plan of God for their life. This gives the believer objectivity in the spiritual life with maximum divine viewpoint thinking. The spiritually maturing believer has a relaxed mental attitude under conditions where others do not and cannot. They know that living the Christian life does not depend upon who and what they are, but who and what God is.

Spiritually maturing believers think divine viewpoint as a direct result of knowing the essence of God and categorical Bible doctrine. They are able to mix points of Bible doctrine with other doctrines in their soul's frame of reference. They recognize the plan of God for their life and agree with God as to the best Christian way of life.

Spiritually maturing believers see human needs around them and orient to those needs in their mental attitude in such a way that they can stay objective and think as God thinks without the coloring of the thinking by emotions, revenge, or spite. Such believers can pray for those needs by asking the Father to accomplish His will in the mental attitude of that person who has the need or test. This divine viewpoint approach leaves the results of that person's tests in the Father's hands.

They offer praise and thanks continually for the faithfulness of God as seen daily. They express by prayer and mental attitude love their personal dependence upon the grace provided to function in the spiritual life in the Angelic Conflict. The spiritually maturing believer recognizes that their spiritual gift



and their priesthood toward others only function in the filling of the Spirit and depend solely on God's grace resources, not their own human abilities or accomplishments. They orient everything in the Angelic Conflict as to God's plan and His Word, to the essence of God, to the function of the believer priest, and to the function of their spiritual gift.