

BACK TO THE BASICS

Heb. 5:12-14 Heb. 6:1-3

Int.

1. Aim: To show that we must get back to the very basic things of Christianity to keep on growing.
2. Text - Heb. 5:12 "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."
3. A disturbing trend seen too often in many churches is the apparent apathy of many Christians - halfhearted - lukewarm
 - a. They may attend services, but it appears that they are only "going through the motions"
 - b. Their singing, their praying, their Bible Study, their zeal, seems indifferent, no zeal
4. CERTAINLY GOD DESIRES MORE FOR HIS CHILDREN! - Rom. 15:13 "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."
5. The problem is one somewhat like an athlete or a sports team which is "in a slump".
 - a. Such a person or team "goes through the motions", but they are not performing up to their true potential
 - b. The solution in sports: Work on "the fundamentals"

6. The same is true with Christians; when we find ourselves "in a slump"...
 - a. We need to stress the fundamentals - Rev. 2:4-5 "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."
 - b. We need to get "Back To The Basics!"
7. In this lesson I would like to stress some of the "fundamentals" or "basics" that we need to get back to whenever our lives are in a spiritual slump.my first suggestion would be to...

Discussion

I. ENERGIZE YOUR "FAITH"

A. DEFINING "FAITH"

1. A Scriptural definition of faith is found in - Heb. 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
2. The NIV is helpful: "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."
3. B.B.E. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the sign that the things not seen are true."
4. VINE'S describes faith as "a firm conviction"
5. I like to think of faith as "confident trust"

B. IMPORTANCE OF "FAITH"

1. Faith in God is essential to pleasing Him - Heb. 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
2. Faith in Jesus is essential to finding forgiveness and eternal life -
 - a. Jn. 8:24 "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am [he], ye shall die in your sins."
 - b. Jn. 20:30-31 "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."
 - c. Without faith, the only alternative is doubt accompanied with fear -
 Matt. 14:30-31 "But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. 31. And immediately Jesus stretched forth [his] hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

C. ENERGIZING YOUR "FAITH"

1. The Word of God is designed to produce faith -
 - a. Rom. 10:17
 - b. Jn. 20:30-31 "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

2. Through diligent reading of the Bible, we can "energize" our faith!
3. So when you find yourself in a spiritual slump, pick up your Bible and allow it to rebuild that "confident trust" you once had! It will also help you to...

II. FORTIFY YOUR "HOPE"

A. DEFINING "HOPE"

1. VINE'S says that it involves "the happy anticipation of good"
2. It is NOT wishful thinking, or an insecure "I hope so"
3. But as VINE'S describes it further, it is "a confident expectation"
4. A common definition of hope is "desire plus expectation"

B. IMPORTANCE OF "HOPE"

1. Hope is necessary to persevere -
 - a. Rom. 8:25 "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."
 - b. 1 Thes. 1:3 "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;"
2. Hope is necessary for our motivation to become pure - 1 Jn 3:2-3 "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

3. Hope is necessary to increase opportunities to evangelize 1 Pet. 3:15 "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"
4. Without hope, we not only lose our souls, we won't be any good for saving others!

C. FORTIFYING YOUR "HOPE"

1. The Word of God was written to produce hope - Rom. 15:4
 - a. Through its revelation of God's dealings with man in the past, we know God keeps His promises
 - b. This encourages us to expect Him to deliver on His promises for the future
2. Peter encourages us to "rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" - 1 Pet 1:13
 - a. Where do read of the "grace" that is to come when Christ is revealed?
 - b. In the Scriptures, of course!
 - c. Nothing "fortifies" our hope better than those wonderful passages that reveal the eternal destiny of the saints!
3. When an athlete gets discouraged, he or she is often told to "keep your eye on the prize!" So the Christian must do, and it is with the aid of God's Word that we can keep our focus where it ought to be.

D. Getting "Back To The Basics" will also include an effort to...

III. ACTIVATE YOUR "LOVE"

A. DEFINING "LOVE"

1. Paul gives the best definition of love - 1 Cor. 13:4-8a
2. A simple definition that is easy to remember: "active goodwill"

B. IMPORTANCE OF "LOVE"

1. Expressing love gives us "assurance" of our salvation -
 - a. 1 Jn 3:14 "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."
 - b. 1 Jn. 3:18-19 "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 19. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."
2. Expressing love assures us that God will answer our prayers - 1 Jn 3:22-23 "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. 23. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."
3. Expressing love reassures us that we abide in God, and He in us 1 Jn 4:7-8,12,16

C. ACTIVATING YOUR "LOVE"

1. Like the Thessalonians, we can be taught by God how to love 1 Thes. 4:9 "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."

- a. Jesus taught us how to love by His sacrificial life - 1 Jn 3:16 "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."
 - b. God taught us how to love by giving His Son as a propitiation for sins - 1 Jn 4:9-11 "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."
2. Through careful meditation upon what the Bible reveals about God's love for us, we can "activate" our love for others!
- D. As we continue to list what is involved in getting "Back To The Basics", I also encourage you to...

IV. ENHANCE YOUR "JOY"

- A. DEFINING "JOY"
 1. The Greek word is CHARA, and is closely related to the word CHARIS
 - a. CHARIS (grace) is "undeserved favor" which in turn gives joy, pleasure, delight
 - b. CHARA (joy), then, is the response we have to undeserved favor
 2. I like to think of joy as the "delightful response" to the grace we receive from God

B. IMPORTANCE OF "JOY"

1. Joy is an essential element of what constitutes the Kingdom of God - Rom. 14:17
 "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."
2. Joy lightens the burden of trials in this life -
 - a. 1 Pe 1:6-9; "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."
 - b. Heb 10:32-34 "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33. Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 34. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."
 - c. It is often the loss of this virtue that is most evident in the lives of many Christians!

C. ENHANCING YOUR "JOY"

1. Both Jesus and His apostles gave us words whereby our joy might be full -
 - a. John 15:11 -- "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and [that] your joy might be full."
 - b. 1 Jn. 1:4 "And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."
 - c. Once again we see the value of daily Bible study
 - d. Just as the Bible can...
 - (1) Energize your faith
 - (2) Fortify your hope
 - (3) Activate your love
 - (4) ...so it can "enhance" your joy!
2. Jesus also stressed the importance of PRAYER in regards to joy Jn 16:24 NKJV
"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."
 - a. Answered prayer certainly excites the Christian, and increases joy!
 - b. So to the practice of daily Bible study, a key to getting "Back To The Basics!" is the habit of regular prayer
3. There is one more "basic" I would like to point out before we conclude this study. You should also...

V. ENJOY YOUR "PEACE"

A. DEFINING "PEACE"

1. VINE'S describes peace as "harmonious relations"
2. It is used to describe such harmony between...
 - a. Men
 - b. Nations
 - c. God and man
 - d. One's own self
3. A lack of peace often contributes to the "spiritual depression" that afflicts many Christians

B. IMPORTANCE OF "PEACE"

1. Another crucial element constituting the Kingdom of God - Rom. 14:17-19
 "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. 18. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. 19. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
2. Peace with brethren contributes to receiving peace from God - 2 Co 13:11 "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."
3. And having peace with God has a positive effect in our peace with our enemies - Prov. 16:7 "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

C. ENJOYING YOUR "PEACE"

1. Peace with God begins with justification found only in Christ Rom. 5:1
 "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"
2. It continues in response to fervent prayer - Phil. 4:6-7 "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
 - a. Just as prayer can "enhance" our joy
 - b. So can prayer help us to "enjoy" our peace that surpasses all understanding!

CONCLUSION

1. Faith, hope, love, joy, peace: simple words, yet so essential to the "abundant life" Jesus has to offer those who come to Him - John 10:10 - more abundant life
2. Why are they often in short supply in the lives of many Christians?
 - a. Because they neglect two fundamental tools God provides for them
 - b. These tools? The Word of God and prayer!
3. Brethren, whenever you find yourself in a spiritual "slump", let these two avenues of communication with God be the key to:
 - a. Energize your faith! - confident trust
 - b. Fortify your hope! - confident expectation
 - c. Activate your love! - active good will
 - d. Enhance your joy! - delightful response to grace
 - e. Enjoy your peace! - harmonious relations

4. Restoring the basic elements of the abundant life found only in Christ is not a mystery:
 - a. Receive the implanted Word of God! - Jas. 1:21 "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - b. Continue earnestly in prayer! - Col. 4:2 "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;"
5. It's just that simple!

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