

BACK TO BASICS



Introduction

1. Do you ever feel you're just "going through the motions"?

Certainly God desires more for his children! - cf. Romm 15:13: *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

2. If this is you, then I suspect the problem is closer to that of 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."*

3. The same is true with Christians; when we find ourselves in a spiritual decline.

- a. We need to stress the fundamentals - cf. Rev 2:4,5: *"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. 5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place."*
- b. We need to get "Back To Basics!" by:
 - Energising our faith
 - Strengthening our hope
 - Activating our love
 - Increasing our joy
 - Enjoying our peace

1. ENERGISE YOUR FAITH

We need to stress some of the "fundamentals" or "basics" to which we must return, whenever our lives are like a spiritual see-saw. The first is to energise our faith.

a. Importance of faith

1. Faith in God is essential to pleasing Him - Heb 11:6 *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he is, and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."*

2. Faith in Jesus is essential to finding forgiveness and eternal life - John 8:24; 20:30,31
3. Without faith, the only alternative is doubt accompanied with fear - cf. Mt 14:30,31 *But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"*

b. Energising your faith

1. The Word of God is designed to produce faith - cf. Rom 10:17; John 20:30-31

Romm 10:17 *Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.*

John 20:30 *Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.*

2. Through diligent reading of the Bible, we can “energise” our faith!

2. STRENGTHEN YOUR HOPE

So when you find yourself in a spiritual slide, pick up your Bible and allow it to rebuild that “confident trust” you once had! It will also help you to strengthen your hope.

a. Importance of hope

1. Hope is necessary to persevere, to hold on to our walk with Jesus - Romm 8:25; 1 Thess 1:3

Romm 8:25 *But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.*

1 Thess 1:3 *We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2. Hope is necessary for our motivation to become pure - 1 John 3:3 *Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*
3. Hope is necessary to help us to evangelise - 1 Pet 3:15 *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*

Without hope, we not only lose our souls, we won't be any good for saving others!

b. Strengthening your hope

1. The Word of God was written to produce hope - Romm 15:4 *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*
 - 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 strengthens our hope better than those wonderful passages that reveal our eternal destiny.

3. ACTIVATE YOUR LOVE

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. Getting "*Back To Basics*" will also include an effort to re-activate our love.

a. Importance of love

Expressing love:

1. Gives us "*assurance*" of our salvation - cf. 1 John 3:14,18,19
2. Assures us that God will answer our prayers - 1 John 3:22,23
3. Re-assures us that we abide in God, and He in us - 1 John 4:7,8,12,16

b. Activating your love

1. Like the Thessalonians, we can be taught by God how to love - cf. 1 Thess 4:9
 - a. Jesus taught us how to love by His sacrificial life - 1 John 3:16 *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.*
 - b. God taught us how to love by giving His Son as a sacrifice for our sins – 1 John 4:9-11
2. Through careful meditation on what the Bible reveals about God's love for us, we can activate our love for others!

4. INCREASE YOUR JOY

As we continue to list what is involved in getting “*Back To Basics*”, let’s encourage each other to increase our joy. After all, joy is strength - Neh 8:10.

a. Defining joy

1. What is joy? Is it the jumping up and down of the football fan, whose team has just won the World Cup?

The New Testament’s word for joy is ‘*Chara*’, and is closely related to the word ‘*Charis*’.

- a. ‘*Charis*’ (grace) is “*undeserved favour*” which in turn gives joy, pleasure, delight
 - b. ‘*Chara*’ (joy), is our response to ‘*undeserved favour*’
2. Joy is, therefore, our response to the wonderful grace that we receive from God.

b. Importance of joy

1. Joy is an essential element of what constitutes the Kingdom of God - Rom 14:17
2. Joy lightens the burden of trials in this life - 1 Pet 1:6-9; Heb 10:32-34
3. It is often the loss of this characteristic that is most evident in the lives of Christians!

c. Increasing your joy

1. Both Jesus and His apostles gave us His promise that our joy might be full - John 15:11 *I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.* (also 1 John 1:4).
 - a. Once again we see the value of **daily Bible study**, so we know that Jesus wants this for us.
 - b. Just as the Bible can:
 - Energise our faith
 - Strengthen our hope
 - Activate our love

So it can increase our joy!

2. Jesus also stressed the importance of **prayer** in regards to joy - John 16:24 *Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.*
 - a. Answered prayer certainly excites the Christian, and increases joy!
 - b. So, in addition to the practice of daily **Bible study**, a key to getting “*Back To Basics!*” is the habit of **regular prayer**

5. ENJOY YOUR PEACE

There is one more “*basic*” I would like to point out before we conclude this study. You should also seek to enjoy your peace.

a. Importance of peace

1. It's another crucial element of the Kingdom of God - Rom 14:17-19
2. Peace with brethren contributes to receiving peace from God - 2 Co 13:11
3. And having peace with God has a positive effect in our peace with our enemies - Pr 16:7

b. Enjoying your peace

1. Peace with God begins with justification that is found only in Christ - Rom 5:1
2. It continues in response to enthusiastic prayer - cf. Phil 4:6-7
 - a. Just as prayer can increase our joy
 - b. So prayer can help us enjoy the peace that passes all understanding!

6. CONCLUSION

1. Faith, hope, love, joy, peace: simple words, yet so essential to the “*abundant life*” that Jesus has to offer those who come to Him.
2. Why are they often in short supply in the lives of many Christians?
 - a. Because we often neglect two fundamental tools God provides for us.
 - b. These tools?
 - The Word of God
 - Prayer
3. Whenever you find yourself in a spiritual downturn, let these **two avenues of communication** with God be the key to:
 - Energise your faith!
 - Strengthen your hope!
 - Activate your love!
 - Increase your joy!

- Enjoy your peace!
- 4. Restoring the basic elements of the abundant life found only in Christ is **not a mystery**:
 - a. Receive the implanted Word of God! - James 1:21 *Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*
 - b. Continue earnestly in prayer! - Col 4:2 *Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*

It's just that simple!

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