

"BACK TO THE BASICS!"

INTRODUCTION:

- A. A disturbing trend often in churches is the apathy of many Christians
 - 1. Attend services, but apparently only "going through the motions"
 - 2. Singing, praying, Bible study, zeal - seems listless
- B. Problem akin to athlete or team "in a slump" - going through motions, but not performing up to their true potential - solution in sports: Work on "the fundamentals"
- C. Same true with Christians; when we find ourselves in a slump - stress fundamentals Rev 2:4-5 - get "Back To The Basics!"
- D. Notice some of the "fundamentals" or "basics" we need to get back to whenever our lives are in a spiritual slump.

DISCUSSION:

I. STRENGTHEN AND ENERGIZE OUR "FAITH"

- A. Defined Heb 11:1 (NIV) "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." VINE'S describes faith as "a firm conviction" - So, think of faith as "confident trust"
- B. Faith is essential to pleasing God Heb 11:6
 - 1. essential to forgiveness and eternal life Jhn 8:24; 20:30-31
 - 2. The alternative to faith is doubt and fear Matt 14:30-31
- C. God's Word designed to produce faith Rom 10:17; Jhn 20:30-31
- D. When in a spiritual slump, pick up Bible and allow it to rebuild that "confident trust" you once had!

II. FAITH FORTIFIES OUR "HOPE"

- A. "Hope" is not wishful thinking or an insecure "I hope so". Vine's Says it involves "the happy anticipation of good" and further describes it as "a confident expectation" - A common definition of hope is: "desire plus expectation"
- B. Hope is very important: necessary to persevere Rom 8:25; 1Thess 1:3; for motivation to become pure 1Jhn 3:2-3; necessary to increase opportunities to teach 1Pet 3:15; without hope, we not only lose our souls, we won't be any good for saving others!
- C. To fortify our "hope" we need God's word which was written to produce hope Rom 15:4
 - 1. By knowing God's dealings with man in the past, we know God keeps His promises, and this encourages us to expect Him to deliver on His promises for the future
 - 2. Note Peter's encouragement 1Pet 1:13 Nothing "fortifies" our hope better than passages revealing eternal destiny of saints!
 - 3. Athlete 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.

III. RESULTS IN ACTIVATION OR SHOWING OUR "LOVE"

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

- B. Showing love is vitally important
 - 1. This gives "assurance" of salvation 1Jhn 3:14,18-19
 - 2. Assures God answer prayers 1Jhn 3:22-23 and Reassures us we abide in God, and He in us 1Jhn 4:7-8,12,16
- C. We must activate our "love" - this love is taught 1Thess 4:9
 - 1. Jesus taught how to love by His sacrificial life 1Jhn 3:16
 - 2. God taught us how to love by giving His Son 1Jhn 4:9-11

IV. THIS ENHANCES OUR "JOY"

- A. The Greek word for "JOY" is CHARA, closely related to CHARIS
 - 1. Charis (grace) "undeserved favor" gives joy, pleasure, delight
 - 2. Chara (joy) is the response we have to undeserved favor
 - 3. Joy is our response to the grace we receive from God
- B. Joy an essential element of the Kingdom of God Rom 14:17
 - 1. Joy lightens burden of trials in life 1Pet 1:6-9; Heb 10:32-34
 - 2. Often loss of joy is most evident in lives of many Christians!
- C. We enhance our "joy" through the Word Jhn 15:11; 1Jhn 1:4
 - 1. Just as Bible study can...Energize our faith; Fortify our hope; Activate our love; it can also "enhance" our joy!
 - 2. Prayer also important in regards to joy Jhn 16:24
 - 3. So we enhance our joy through daily Bible study and prayer

V. NOW WE ENJOY OUR "PEACE"

- A. Lack of peace often contributes to "spiritual doldrums" that afflict many Christians. Vine's defines peace as "harmonious relations" used to describe such harmony between... Men; Nations; God and man; and One's own self
- B. Peace another element of Kingdom of God Rom 14:17-19
- C. Peace with brethren contributes to receiving peace from God 2Cor 13:11 and peace with God has a positive effect in our peace with our enemies Prov 16:7
- D. Have peace with God when justified: found only in Christ Rom 5:1
 - 1. Peace continues in response to fervent prayer Phil 4:6-7
 - 2. Just as prayer can "enhance" our joy; it can help us to "enjoy" our peace that surpasses all understanding!

CONCLUSION

- A. Faith, hope, love, joy, peace: simple words, yet so essential to the "abundant life" Jesus has to offer those who come to Him
- B. Often in short supply in lives of many Christians because we neglect two fundamental tools God provides: The Word of God and prayer!
- C. In a spiritual "slump"? These two ways of communication with God are the keys to: Energizing our faith; Fortifying our hope; Activating our love; Enhancing our joy; and Enjoying our peace!
- D. Restoring the basic elements of the abundant life found only in Christ is not a mystery: Receive the implanted Word of God! Jas 1:21 and continue earnestly in prayer! Col 4:2 - It's just that simple!

(Outline from Mark Copeland revised by JLH)