

THE BASICS OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

1/3/08

The following topics lay the foundation for an acceptable Christian life, which is both pleasing to God's people and God himself.

1. The salvation message is simple, yet very effective.

MAR 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; Jesus declared that signs would be part of salvation... this would take the guess work out of it for the common people. Amongst the signs, one stands out as the sign of salvation... speaking in tongues.

ACT 10:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. *How did they know? Because the sign of salvation was present once again... they spoke in tongues. This is a simple, but powerful message... unknown to most.*

46 For they heard them **speak with tongues**, and magnify God.

Tongues, are the sign of salvation, other gifts are signs of the indwelling Spirit. Tongues is permanently enabled, as it identifies the permanent nature towards the salvation promises. The other gifts are part of the working of the Spirit and need to be exercised to become more and more effective. Salvation like tongues is already effective and simply needs to be applied.

ISA 28:11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

12 To whom he said, **This is the rest** wherewith ye may cause the **weary to rest**; and this is the **refreshing: yet they would not hear** (*perceive, understand, obey*). *If we don't understand this simple message, then it will leave us wanting more and cause confusion when it comes to serving God and maintaining sound fellowship.*

2. There is an acceptable level of faith, which should not be confused with our potential.

As humans we have a huge potential, but most will not become experts in any special field of endeavour. Athletes take normal and healthy living to the edges of human potential, but it does not make them any more human than anyone else. Likewise with Christians, there is an acceptable level of behavior... many confuse their potential with their salvation. However, their life is assured as they walk in the Spirit and it is the Spirit which opens the door towards further aspirations. This should not be confused with the type of life that is still pleasing to God.

ROM 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service*. *The basics of serving God are not difficult.*

Paul warns us that temptations are normal... not a sign of weakness nor unworthiness.

1COR 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to **bear it**. *God is with us to help us through... we need not strive.*

2COR 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the **excellency** of the power may be of God, and not of us. *This is the secret to understanding how we fit into the plan of God... it is not about our ability, it is about his ability to work with us. This lessens our demands upon ourselves and passes on our ability to have faith in God and to work with the Spirit.*

3. Spiritual bullying. *We can all be made to feel guilty about our spiritual shortcomings as we all have them. It is not difficult to highlight failings when we all have a conscience which determines we are all unworthy of the blessings of God. Interestingly, we still remain unworthy no matter what we do, so being driven by guilt is unfruitful and leads to discontentment and failure. It also leads to judgmental attitudes towards our fellow brothers and sisters. We are worthy because God makes us worthy, not because we commit our lives to spiritually athletic lifestyles. With that said, we are also encouraged to step out in faith and grow in ability and commitment.*

PHI 2:3 *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Personal zeal can lead to failure, because it often confuses potential with normality. This is bad enough when someone sets high standards for themselves, but it becomes bullying when they contaminate others with their errors. God wants us to be gentle and encouraging with each other, with special emphasis given to lift up those who are weak.*

4 *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

ROM 15:1 *We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

1COR 3:2 *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. Paul used the wisdom of the Spirit to determine the exact amount of nurturing and encouragement each person needs.*

4. Inviting people to fellowship meetings... *The plan of God is to save souls... we are part of that plan.*

2COR 3:5 *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;*
6 *Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. This is about our willingness to let God work in us... Not our personal ability and skill to do the will of God.*

1COR 6:19 *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? Learning to hand over to God, eliminates much of the guilt and failings associated with Christian life.*

20 *For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

PHI 1:6 *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: This is what Christ wants us to keep in mind every day of our lives... let's work with him towards this goal. He gave us a sign of this commitment to us... we pray in the Spirit and that sign is still with us... and will remain so till Jesus Christ returns.*