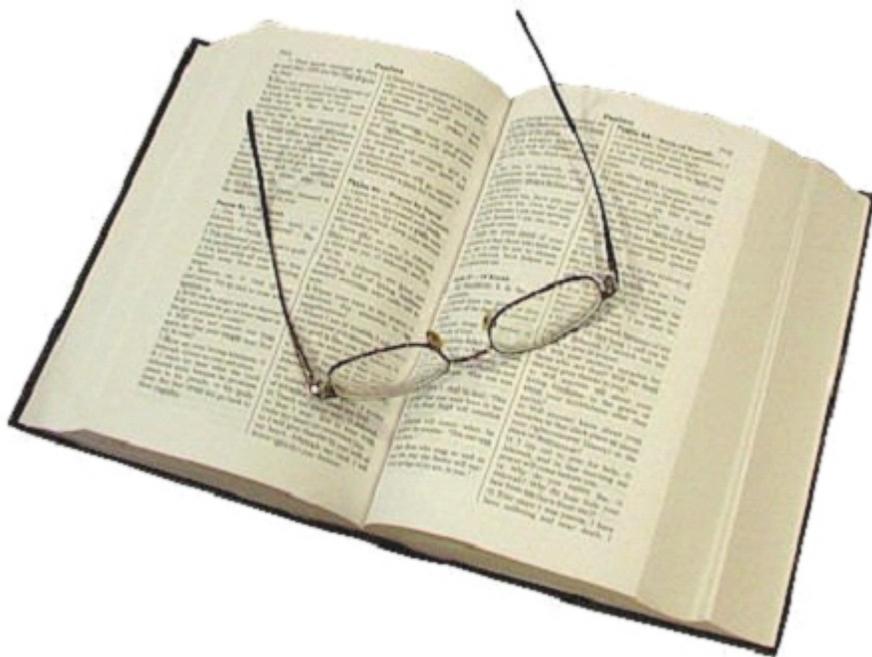

The Work of the Lord



“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” - 1 Corinthians 15:58

A Series of Seven Sermons

Gene Taylor

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“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”
Ephesians 2:10

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The Autopsy of a Dead Body

Introduction

1. We do not like to think of death.
2. We do not like to be around a dead body.
3. Yet, there are some things to be learned from a corpse.

I. Some Facts About a Corpse

- A. A corpse never realizes it is dead.
- B. A corpse does nothing on its own initiative.
 1. Everything that happens to it is the result of what someone else does for it.
 2. It just lies there.
- C. Everyone speaks well of a corpse.
 1. A sense of decency and decorum keeps comments positive.
 2. People do not want to hurt the reputation of the corpse or those related to it.
- D. The effects of embalming are only temporary.
 1. To keep it looking alive.
 2. To keep it from rotting and stinking.

II. Some Applications

- A. The individual.
 1. Many do not realize they are spiritually dead (1 Tim. 5:6; Acts 4:12; 2 Pet. 1:5-11).
 2. Many do nothing on their own initiative.
 - a. "Come follow Me" (Matt. 5:19; 11:28-30; Rev. 22:17).
 - b. Christians who do nothing are dead (Titus 2:14; John 15:1-8) but many expect everything to be done to them and for them.
 3. Be careful when everyone speaks well of you (Luke 6:26).
 4. Obedience which is not from the heart has only short term effects (Rom. 6:17-18; Luke 9:62; 3:16-17).
- B. Churches.
 1. Many do not realize they are dead (Rev. 3:1-3; cf. vv. 14-19).
 2. Churches which only "keep house" and never take any initiative to reach out and work are dead.
 3. Churches that everyone speaks well of are usually overlooking internal rottenness in the form of immoral behavior, soft doctrine, a lack of discipline, etc. (Luke 6:26; Rev. 2:1-5).
 4. When a church loses its zeal for truth, its determination to rebuke error, its commitment to work, for awhile it still seems alive due to its temporary

association with Christ but the effects of the “embalming fluid” soon wears off and it begins to deteriorate and stink to high heaven.

Conclusion

1. There are many lessons to be learned from a corpse.
2. We must learn them for though we will all be physical corpses one day, we must endeavor to keep from being a spiritual one.

Why Aren't More Christians Involved in the Work of the Lord?

Introduction

1. Those deeply concerned about the salvation of souls and the progress of the church often face discouragement.
 - a. Discouragements can include unconcern on the part of the lost or opposition from false teachers.
 - b. The greatest discouragement: *lack of involvement on the part of so many Christians.*
2. This lesson will consider some reasons why some do not become involved.

I. A Lack of Conversion

- A. The basic idea of conversion is change: There must be a change of:
 1. Heart: intellect, will, and emotions.
 2. Conduct (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Rom. 6:1-4).
 3. Relationship. As servants (Rom. 6:17-18; Col. 1:13; Gal. 3:26-27); as citizens (Col. 1:13); and as children (Gal. 3:26-27).
- B. If one has not made these changes, is he really converted?
- C. Some have only been "churched."

II. An Erroneous View of the Local Church

- A. Some view the church as an agency that will have an impact on the world simply because of numerical strength, size of building, wealth, etc.
 1. Such think, "If I join up, support expansion, increase wealth, I am a Christian."
 2. This outlook destroys involvement because it makes the church an agency.
- B. The church becomes an agency that:
 1. Allows one to hire another to do his work.
 - a. The preacher does the teaching, deacons see to the poor, elders tend to the wayward.
 - b. My responsibility: attending and paying my dues.
 2. Exists for the sole purpose of serving its members.
 - a. These are people who demand attention.
 - b. These must be catered to, visited, called on, patted on the back constantly, etc.
 3. Exists only when it assembles.
 - a. This makes collective responsibilities only such things as ushering, leading singing, making announcements, etc.

- b. These complain when they are not used enough, i.e., not used in a public way at least every week.

III. A Lack of Understanding of Individual Responsibility

- A. A common expression often heard, "I don't want to get involved."
 - 1. Being a Christian means getting involved (Josh. 24:15; Rom. 6:16-18).
 - 2. Involvement in the local body is a must (1 Cor. 12:12-27).
- B. There is no avoiding individual involvement by being a part of a group.
 - 1. On a sports team, each player must be involved in the game, in a chorus you must sing your part, on a police force each officer must patrol his area, etc.
 - 2. When one is added to the church, he is not credited with the efforts of others.

IV. A Failure to Understand that the Success of the Church Demands Individual Involvement

- A. Consider the collective expressions of worship: individual involvement is demanded for success.
- B. Church discipline, though a collective action, involves each individual.
- C. If the local church is to fulfill its three-fold mission of work, it not only needs money but also individuals who are willing to do what they are able to do (Mark 14:8).

V. A Lack of Sincere Dedication and Commitment

- A. Dedicated people have changed sacred history. Consider Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Joseph, Moses Rahab, Ruth, Nehemiah, Esther.
- B. The history of the first century church is a record of people who were willing to get involved.

Conclusion

"A king placed a large stone in the middle of a heavily traveled highway. Shortly thereafter, a farmer drove by in his wagon, looked at the stone, wondered how it got there and why someone hadn't moved it, and then drove around. Later, a company of soldiers marched by. The commanding officer cursed the unknown party who put the stone there, and then ordered his soldiers to break rank and march around the stone. The stone stayed in the road several days until finally an old man took time to painfully move the stone from the highway, and when he did, he found a bag with a note attached: 'To the one who removes the stone.' Sometimes getting involved can be a painful experience. It may mean ridicule, financial loss, persecution but always there is that bag of gold: Rev. 22:14 - 'Blessed are they that do His commandments that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.'" (Anonymous)

Essentials to the Work of the Lord

Introduction

1. What do you think is the greatest problem in the church today?
 - a. Moral problems? Institutional issues? Marriage, divorce and remarriage problems?
 - b. One of the greatest problems is lack of work. We are created for them (Eph. 2:10) and are to be zealous of them (Titus 2:14).
2. Often the Lord's work is not accomplished because disciples do not possess the proper attitudes.
 - a. One might ask, "What are those attitudes?"
 - b. This lesson will seek to list and explain some of them.

I. A Powerful Faith

- A. If one believes nothing, he will do nothing.
 1. If we do not think we can do something, we are not going to try it.
 2. Consider the example of the spies (Num. 13:17ff; 14:11-12).
- B. With faith, "all things are possible" (Matt. 17:14-21).
- C. No works = no faith (Jas. 2:14ff); conversely, no faith = no works.

II. A Joyful Heart

- A. We should not be despondent and down-hearted (Phil. 4:4).
- B. We have so many good things for which to be thankful.

III. A Continual Reliance on Prayer

- A. The prayer of the righteous avails much (Jas. 5:16ff; Matt. 21:18-22).
- B. People who are interested enough to pray are interested enough to work.
- C. We know that God answers prayer (Matt. 7:7-11) and that prayer changes things.

IV. A Personal Love

- A. A love for the Lord (John 14:23-24; cf. 1 John 5:3; 2:4).
- B. Love for the brethren (Heb. 13:1; 1 John 4:20-21; Heb. 10:24-25).
 1. To function collectively, there must be love and unity (1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:1-4).
 2. Some would rather "bite and devour" others (Gal. 5:15).
- C. Love for the lost. Consider the attitudes displayed in Luke 19:10 and Luke 15:1-7.
- D. Without love, nothing else matters (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

V. A Persistent Effort

- A. Persistency of effort is the secret of success (Luke 18:1-8).

B. Application:

1. Noah took **120** years to build the ark (Gen. 6:3).
 2. The example of Paul (Phil. 3:12-15).
- C. We are to be living a life of service (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:58).
- D. We must not be discouraged by lack of results.

Conclusion

1. Every Christian needs to possess each of these attitudes.
2. If the work of the Lord is going to be accomplished, it will be by those who are loving, joyful, faithful, prayerful and persistent.

The Work of the Church

Introduction

1. The word “church” (Gk. *ekklesia* meaning literally “to call out”) is used in three senses in the NT.
 - a. **The church universal.** All those called out of the world into God’s service, the universal body of the saved (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23).
 - b. **The local church.** Those called out into God’s service in a definite locality, saints banded together in a particular location (1 Cor. 1:2; Acts 15:22; Rom. 16:16).
 - c. **Assemblies of people.**
 - 1) The unruly mob at Ephesus (Acts 19:32).
 - 2) The city council at Ephesus (Acts 19:39).
 - 3) An assembly of saints for worship (1 Cor. 11:18; 14:35).
2. God established the local church as the only collective medium through which early Christians worked. In the NT we see every collective good work done through the local organization.
 - a. Missions were sent out (Acts 13:1-3) who in turn reported to the local church (Acts 14:25-28).
 - b. Charity to needy saints was accomplished (Acts 11:29-30). Funds for poor saints in Judea were placed in the hands of the elders of the Judean churches to be administered by them.
3. Each Christian should be a member of a local church. Reasons include:
 - a. The flock (local church) is to be fed on the local level (1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28).
 - b. All oversight is on the local level (1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17).
 - c. All worship is on a local level.
 - 1) Christ made no provisions for the universal church to meet on earth for worship.
 - 2) There are numerous examples and exhortations for Christians to assemble locally for worship: Sing together, teaching and admonishing one another (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); partake of the Lord’s Supper together (1 Cor. 11:17-34; Acts 20:7); hear preaching of God’s word (Acts 20:7); pray together (1 Cor. 14:16f); and contribute (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
 - d. God commands us not to forsake the assembling of the saints (Heb. 10:24-25).
 - e. To accomplish the work He has given the church to do for the local church is the only collective, organic structure found in the NT to accomplish the mission of Christ.
4. This lesson will answer the question, “What work has God given the local church to do?”

I. The Three-Fold Work of the Church as Noted in Ephesians 4:11-12

A. **Edification.** “For the equipping (“perfecting” - KJV) of the saints.”

1. “Properly signified to place the parts of any machine or body in their proper order and to unite them in such a manner as to render the machine or body complete” (James MacKnight, *MacKnight on the Epistles*, p. 335)
2. This is the work of educating, training and developing Christians for acceptable Spiritual service.

B. **Benevolence.** “For the work of ministering.”

1. In various passages the original term, which comes from the same word as “deacon,” is translated “minister” and “service,” thus service is the idea whether physical or spiritual in nature.
2. This comprises the work of benevolence—ministering to, or supplying the needs of the worthy poor, the sick, the suffering or the sorrowing.

C. **Evangelism.** “For the edifying (“building up” - ASV) of the body of Christ.”

1. The word translated “edifying” or “building up” is used figuratively of spiritual growth.
 - a. As a noun it literally means a building or edifice.
 - b. As a verb it means to build a house. It was used by Jesus in Matthew 16:18.
 - c. It was used by Paul in the sense of planting, establishing or enlarging the borders of the church by the preaching of the gospel and bringing of the lost into the kingdom (v. 16).
2. Evangelism is proclaiming the message of salvation to the lost in order to bring them to Christ.

II. The Work of Evangelism

A. Since mankind is lost in sin (Rom. 3:23) and the gospel is the only power to save them (Rom. 1:16), God wants the gospel preached (Mark 16:15; 1 Cor. 1:21) and has given the obligation to the church and the individuals who comprise it (Eph. 3:10-11).

1. The church’s “marching orders” to evangelize are given in the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).
2. The church is to hold forth the word of life (Phil. 2:16 - KJV).

B. Churches of the first century were evangelistic-minded.

1. They sent preachers out into the world to preach the gospel.
2. In a period of about 30 years they preached the gospel to the whole world (Col. 1:23).
3. Churches in our day need to emulate their interest in the lost and put forth every effort to take the gospel to the world.

III. The Work of Edification

A. The church is to develop its own spiritual strength by edification (Eph. 4:16).

B. In God’s divine arrangement, He set offices in the church for the equipping or perfecting of the saints (Eph. 4:11-12).

- C. The church is to “let all things be done for edification” (1 Cor. 14:26) in order to ground and stabilize itself so that it members:
1. Can mature (Eph. 4:13-14).
 2. Will not be led away by false doctrine (Col. 2:6-7).
 3. Can teach others (Heb. 5:12).
 4. Have love, knowledge and discernment (Phil. 1:9).
 5. Have a growing faith and an abounding love toward each other (2 Thes. 1:3).
 6. Can resist the devil in all of his devices (Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9; 2 Cor. 2:11).

IV. The Work of Benevolence

- A. Though the church has responsibilities in this area, as the Scriptures plainly teach, this work is limited.
1. Some have a misconception that church benevolence should be general, helping all humanity but general benevolence would be an impossible task and would exhaust all of the churches’ supplies with no resources left to do any other work God gave the church to perform.
 2. God even limits the saints whom the church may help (1 Tim. 5:16; 5:8).
 3. The limited nature of the work of benevolence is eloquently stated by the late Luther Blackmon in a tract entitled “Benevolence, the Brethren and the Bible:”
“It is no accident that the early church confined its benevolence to the saints. Benevolence is not the mission of the church except in a secondary sense. The mission of the church is to save souls. Christ, the head of the church, said that His mission was to ‘seek and to save the lost’ (Matt. 18:11; Lk. 19:10). The mission of the church is the same as the mission of its head. It is true that he fed the hungry and healed the infirm, but that is not why he came; and this is not why the church exists. Emergencies will arise. The church is a spiritual body; it has a spiritual mission;...Some benevolent work necessarily and rightfully falls upon the church because of our relationship to each other as a family. as in the Jerusalem church in Acts 2, 4 and 6. This is benevolent work that ought to be done by the church.” (pp. 11-12)
- B. The NT contains many examples of first century churches providing benevolence to the saints.
- C. It can clearly be seen from Scripture that when a need arose among the people of God, the church rallied to their aid (2 Cor. 8:1-8).
1. Brethren were concerned for one another and demonstrated their love by giving to help satisfy their material needs.
 2. We must reflect that same interest for each other.

Conclusion

1. These things constitute the work of the church.
2. We must be satisfied with the mission God gave the church and not prostitute its work into unauthorized activities.
3. On the other hand, we must not neglect that for which God has given us the responsibility.

The Success of the Early Church

Introduction

1. The early church was very successful in all areas in which Christ had given it responsibility.
 - a. Evangelism. It experienced a tremendous growth in number.
 - b. Edification. It was edified or built up spiritually (Acts 9:31).
 - c. Benevolence. It relieved the needs of destitute saints (Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35; 6:1-6).
2. This lesson will explore the factors that contributed to making the early church so successful.

I. Why the Early Church Was So Successful

- A. The disciples were steadfast (Acts 2:42). Steadfast: "To give constant attention to a thing" (J.H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*, p. 547).
- B. The disciples were fearful (Acts 2:43; 5:11; 9:31).
- C. The disciples were united (Acts 2:46; 2:44; 4:32).
- D. The disciples were liberal in their giving (Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35)
- E. The disciples were zealous (Acts 2:46).
- F. The disciples patiently endured trials and tribulations even rejoicing in them (Acts 5:41-42; Heb. 10:32-34).
- G. The disciples served God with "simplicity ("singleness" - KJV) of heart" (Acts 2:46).
 1. "Simplicity" came from a word which meant "without rock, smooth, plain" and came to mean "simplicity, sincerity, freedom from duplicity and hypocrisy."
 2. There were no ulterior motives in their service.
 3. They gave themselves wholly to the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. 8:5).

II. Application of These Principles Today

- A. We should be steadfast.
 1. We should give constant attention to our lives in regard to doctrine, fellowship, worship, prayer and service (cf. Rom. 12:12).
 2. Too many who claim to be Christians are haphazard in their living.
- B. We should be fearful (Eccl. 12:13; Psa. 89:7; Matt. 10:28; Heb. 12:28; Phil. 2:12; 1 Pet. 1:17).
 1. Fear: "reverence toward God, godly fear, piety."
 2. The example of Noah (Heb. 11:7).
- C. We should be united (John 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3).
- D. We should be liberal in our giving (2 Cor. 9:6-7; Acts 20:35; 2 Cor. 8:1-7).
- E. We should be zealous:
 1. Of good works (Titus 2:14; Eph. 2:10).
 2. Not lagging in diligence but rather fervent in spirit serving the Lord (Rom. 12:11).

- F. We should patiently endure and rejoice in trials and tribulations (Rom. 12:12).
- G. We should serve God with “simplicity (singleness) of heart” (Acts 2:46).

Conclusion

1. If we want to reproduce the success of the early church, we must produce in ourselves those qualities they possessed that made them successful.
2. Each of us should examine himself/herself then earnestly endeavor to worship and serve God with “gladness and simplicity of heart.”
3. Remember, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31).

Working and Cooperating with Other Christians

Introduction

1. Man alone is a very helpless being but he becomes strong by relating himself to forces outside himself.
 - a. He relates himself to natural power in the world by use of steam, electricity and machinery thus multiplying his strength.
 - b. The Christian increases his “spiritual strength” by cooperating and working with other Christians (Eccl. 4:9).
2. Cooperation helps all.

I. The Wisdom of Cooperating with One Another

- A. In the Old Testament.
 1. Locusts (Prov. 30:27).
 2. Cord (Eccl. 4:12).
 3. Nehemiah and the wall of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:17 - 6:15).
- B. In the New Testament.
 1. Christians must work together for they have a huge task to accomplish (2 Cor. 6:1).
 2. Cooperation among Christians is illustrated by the figure of the human body (1 Cor. 12:14-27; Eph. 4:16). Sadly, by failing to cooperate, some want to make the local church crippled or blind.
 3. We are to be “fellow-workers” (1 Cor. 3:9). The context (1 Cor. 3:1-8) shows how.
 - a. By not being divided (vv. 1-4).
 - b. By cooperating as did Paul and Apollos (vv. 5-8).

II. Some Reasons Why Some Fail to Cooperate

- A. A lack of oneness.
 1. Christians are to walk by the same rule (Phil. 3:15-16).
 2. Disciples are to be of the same mind (Phil. 1:27; 2:5).
 3. Cooperation and unity are considered pleasant by the Lord (Psa. 133:1).
 4. The uncooperative and sower of discord are in danger (Prov. 6:16-19; Gal. 5:15).
- B. Two contrasted dispositions: self depreciation and depreciation of other Christians.
 1. Self depreciation (1 Cor. 12:15-16).
 - a. One with this attitude is of no use because he thinks he does not amount to anything.
 - b. We are held responsible for the talents (abilities) we do possess (Matt. 25:14-30).

2. Depreciation of other Christians (1 Cor. 12:21).
 - a. Each one should appreciate and desire to work with others.
 - b. No one is more important than another in the eyes of God.
- C. A self-willed spirit.
 1. This is the attitude of “my way or else” which is a sign of immaturity.
 2. The wisdom of God states that elders not be “self-willed” (Titus 1:7) or “lord it over the charge allotted to them” (1 Pet. 5:3).
- D. An unholy ambition for power and preeminence.
 1. Such leads to conflicts, struggles and strife.
 2. A modern “Diotrophes” is sure to cause discord (3 John 9).
- E. Bitterness, anger and wrath (Eph. 4:31).
 1. “An angry man stirs up strife” (Prov. 29:22).
 2. “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city” (Prov. 16:32).
 3. One who is incapable of controlling self is unable to handle critical situations (Eph. 4:26).
- F. A lack of communication and understanding between members. We must have a proper love, concern and respect for each other (Phil. 2:1-5).

Conclusion

1. Each of us must be concerned with this matter.
2. We must constantly ask ourselves if we are cooperating with others.\

Back to the Basics

Introduction

1. A disturbing trend seen too often in many local churches is the apparent apathy of many Christians—they may attend services but it appears that they are only “going through the motions.”
2. The problem is one akin to a sports team which is in a “slump.”
 - a. Such a 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 slump.”
 - a. We need to stress the fundamentals (cf. Rev. 2:4-5).
 - b. We need to get “Back to the Basics.”

I. Energize Your “Faith”

- A. “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Heb. 11:1 - NIV).
 1. “A firm conviction” (W.E. Vine, *Expository of Dictionary of NT Words*, p. 411).
 2. A good practical definition is “confident trust.”
- B. The importance of faith in our lives.
 1. Faith in God is essential to pleasing Him (Heb. 11:6).
 2. Faith in Jesus is essential to finding forgiveness (John 20:30-31).
 3. The alternative to faith is doubt accompanied with fear (Matt. 14:30-31).
- C. Energizing your faith.
 1. God’s word is designed to produce faith (Rom. 10:17).
 2. Through diligent reading of the Bible you can energize your faith.
 3. Read your Bible and allow it to develop that “confident trust” you once had.

II. Fortify Your “Hope”

- A. What is hope?
 1. “The happy anticipation of good” (Vine, p. 572).
 2. It is *not* wishful thinking or an insecure “I hope so.”
 3. Vine further describes it as “a confident expectation” (Ibid.)
 4. A common definition is “desire plus expectation.”
- B. The importance of hope in our lives.
 1. Hope is necessary to persevere (1 Thes. 1:3).
 2. Hope is necessary to increase opportunities to evangelize (1 Pet. 3:15).

C. Fortifying your hope.

1. The word of God was written to produce hope (Rom. 15:4).
2. Through the Bible's revelation of God's dealing with man in the past, we know God keeps His promises. This encourages us to expect Him to deliver on His promises for the future.
3. Nothing fortifies hope better than those wonderful passages that reveal the eternal destiny of the saints. (1 Pet. 1:13).
4. When an athlete gets discouraged, he or she is often told to "keep your eye on the prize." So must the Christian (Heb. 12:3).

III. Activate Your "Love"

A. Defining love.

1. The best definition of love is found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a.
2. A simple definition that is easy to remember is "active goodwill."

B. The importance of love.

1. It gives us assurance of our salvation (1 John 3:14, 18-19).
2. Expressing love assures us that God will hear our prayers (1 John 3:22-23).
3. "If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us" (1 John 4:12).

C. Activating your love.

1. We can be taught by God how to love (1 Thes. 4:9).
 - a. Jesus taught us how to love by His sacrificial life (John 3:16).
 - b. God taught us how to love by giving His Son as a propitiation for sins (1 John 4:9-11).
2. Through careful meditation upon what the Bible reveals about God's love for us, we can activate our love for others.

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. Think of joy as the happy response to the grace we receive from God.

B. The importance of joy.

1. Joy is an essential element of 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 virtue that is most evident in the lives of weary Christians.

C. Enhancing your joy.

1. Both Jesus and His apostles gave words whereby our joy might be full (John 15:11; 1 John 1:4).
2. Jesus stressed the importance of prayer in regards to joy (John 16:24). Answered prayers certainly excite the Christian and increase joy.

V. Enjoy Your “Peace”

A. Peace is defined as “harmonious relations” (Vine, p. 851).

1. It describes harmony between men; nations; God and man; and one’s own self.
2. A lack of peace often contributes to the spiritual doldrums that afflict many Christians.

B. The importance of peace.

1. It is another crucial element of the Kingdom of God (Rom. 14:17-19).
2. Living in peace with my brethren contributes to receiving peace from God (2 Cor. 13:11).
3. Having peace with God has a positive effect in our peace with our enemies (Prov. 16:7).

C. Enjoying your peace.

1. Peace with God begins with justification in Christ (Rom. 5:1).
2. Peace continues in response to fervent prayer (cf. Phil 4:6-7).
3. Just as prayer can enhance our joy, it can also help us to enjoy our peace that surpasses all understanding.

Conclusion

1. Faith, hope, love, joy, and peace: simple words, yet so essential to the “abundant life” Jesus has to offer those who come to Him.
2. Why are these so often in short supply in the lives of many Christians? Because they neglect two fundamental tools God provides for them: the word of God and prayer.
3. Whenever you are in a spiritual slump, let these two avenues of communication with God be the keys to energizing your faith, fortifying your hope, activating your love, enhancing your joy and enjoying your peace.
4. Restoring the basic elements of the joyful life found in Christ is not a mystery. It is as simple as:
 - a. Meekly receiving the implanted word of God (Jas. 1:21).
 - b. Continuing earnestly in prayer (Col. 4:2).



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