

The Need for Teaching the Fundamentals

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The church is composed of imperfect people. If the church was designed only for perfect people, then the church would be imperfect because as Paul wrote to the Roman Christians, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). The apostle John added, “If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (1 Jn. 1:10). So, the church as designed by God takes imperfect people whom Peter called “babes” and builds them up in the faith (1 Pet. 2:1, 2). Just as the nutrients from the various food groups provide energy for the physical body to grow, even so the Word of God provides the power which allows each member of the church to grow toward maturity. On one occasion Job commented that God’s Words were regarded of greater value than his own physical food. He said, “Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12).

Steps of Faith

The ancient patriarch Abraham carefully walked in steps of faith as directed by the Word of God (Rom. 4:12). He is heralded in the book of Hebrews for all he did “by faith” (Heb. 11). The only source of faith today is the Word of God. Paul wrote, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Like Abraham, God is calling people today by means of the gospel to begin a walk of faith (2 Thess. 2:14). The gospel of Christ is God’s power to save the sinner, but he must first hear the gospel (Rom. 1:16; Eph. 1:13). Second, the gospel message must be believed, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness” (Rom. 10:10a). Third, since sin separates the soul from God, repentance from sin is commanded from Christ (Isa. 59:1-2; Lk. 13:3). Fourth, confession of faith in Christ is done unto salvation for “with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10b). Fifth, baptism by immersion in water for the remission of sins as commanded by Christ puts one into Christ where all spiritual blessings are and adds the believer to the church of Christ (Col. 2:12; Jn. 3:5; Acts 2:38; Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:16; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 1:3; Acts 2:47).

Growth Demands Faith

Upon becoming an obedient child of God the believer is now ready to grow. Peter admonished, “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen” (2 Pet. 3:18). Just as the basic steps of faith taken to bring a person into Christ must emerge from the Word of God, even so the spiritual growth of the new Christian must come about as he is taught the fundamentals of the faith.

No Growth Outside of the Faith

In order for the child of God to grow spiritually he must increase his faith in God. Jude wrote, “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 20-21). Upon being confronted with the Lord’s teaching which dealt with resolving offenses between brethren, the apostles made a fitting request wherein they said, “Lord, Increase our faith” (Lk. 17:5). Faith is increased as one reads and studies his Bible (Rev. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:15). The resulting spiritual growth is a Divine production. The apostle Peter taught, “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be

multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:1-4).

One Faith

Personal spiritual growth is produced by the system of faith which is heaven sent. There is only one Divine system of faith. Paul wrote about “one faith” in Ephesians 4:5. This “one faith” is not in a state of development or constantly changing, for Jude wrote, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

Conclusion

The need exists for teaching the fundamentals of this one system of faith presented exclusively within the pages of God’s inspired Word.